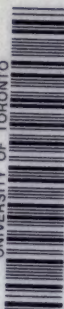


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THE HISTORY

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THE BRITISH NAVY,

FROM THE

EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT TIME.

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BY C. D. YONGE.

"ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY."



SECOND EDITION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY,

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1866.

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TO HER MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

QUEEN VICTORIA,

*This Work,*

BY HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

IS DEDICATED,

WITH PROFOUND RESPECT,

BY HER MAJESTY'S MOST DUTIFUL SUBJECT,

CHARLES DUKE YONGE.



## P R E F A C E.

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ON sending forth the following volumes, it may be proper briefly to state the authorities on which the compiler of them has principally relied. The Board of Admiralty, with great liberality, have granted him access, without the slightest restriction, to all despatches and documents of every kind in their possession, of a date prior to the close of the year 1841. Lady Arthur Somerset placed in his hands several letters of her grandfather, Admiral Boscawen. Lord Camperdown furnished him with many details, previously unknown, relating to his grandfather's victory over the Dutch fleet. And, in giving an account of the more recent operations, he has been aided by a great number of distinguished living officers, whose kindness he acknowledges with every feeling of gratitude.

Sir H. D. Chads, Sir S. Lushington, Sir W. Parker, Sir M. Seymour, Sir H. Stewart, Admirals Collinson and Yelverton, Captains Caldwell, Key, Lyons, Mends, Oldfield, Osborn, Sullivan, Willes, and Wise, with several other officers who have been present at one or other of the various naval operations of the last twenty years, have given him the most generous assistance ;



some, by the unreserved communication of letter-books, journals, and memoranda; others by copious answers to his questions; and, in some cases, by a careful revision of his statements. Lord Hotham, too, has kindly lent him the letter-books of the late Admiral Sir Charles Hotham, while employed on the remarkable expedition up the Parana. So that, in no single instance, for his account of the chief transactions of recent date, has he been without the guidance of more than one of the officers principally concerned in it. Most especially is he under obligations to his gallant friend Captain C. W. Hope, for a careful revision of a great portion of the proof-sheets. If he has been able to avoid the technical errors to which a landsman, writing on naval matters, must be continually liable, it is through that assistance alone that he has been enabled to do so.

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# THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH NAVY.

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## CHAPTER I.

A.D. 700 — 1350.

The Navy the favourite force of Britain — The early Britons — Alfred, the founder of the British Navy — Athelstan — Ethelred — Earl Godwin's galley — Harold's naval victory — Henry II.'s conquest of Ireland — The Dromunda — The battle of Dam — The battle in the Straits of Dover — The battle in Edward I.'s reign — The battle of Sluys.

EVERY country which has aspired to durable empire, or to permanent renown, has prided itself upon some one peculiar quality or endowment, on which, in its own opinion, the foundations of its power, or its best title to fame, have mainly rested. It was in this spirit that Tyre vaunted her commerce, Athens her literary and philosophical genius, Rome her unrivalled talent for administration and legislation. So also, in modern times, the principal nations of Europe have each cherished some one distinguishing characteristic with peculiar affection. Austria has exulted in her diplomatic subtlety, France in the courage and skill of her armies, and Great Britain in her genius for naval affairs, which has for centuries been pre-eminent, and which has gradually established her maritime supremacy on so sure a footing that even her most jealous rivals admit it, and unresistingly, it may almost be said unreluctantly, concede to her the undisputed

title of the Mistress of the Sea. It is the object of the present writer to trace briefly the great deeds by which his country arrived at this height of acknowledged power and glory, and to describe the brave and loyal men who performed them ; that the recollection of their virtue, and the contemplation of their undying glory, may stimulate future generations to imitate that virtue, to seek to rival that glory, and to preserve for Britain, by their own devotion, that power and that renown which the heroes of former ages won for her by their blood.

The aboriginal Britons, in spite of their insular position, were in no respect a maritime people : though the Phœnicians were habitual visitors of the western districts of the island, their example inspired the inhabitants with no inclination for commerce ; nor did the invasions of the Romans and the Saxons suggest to them the necessity of fleets to defend their coasts from the repeated descents of such merciless enemies. When the Saxons had established themselves as masters of England, and were, in their turn, invaded and pillaged by the Danes, not one sovereign of the whole Heptarchy ever attempted to repel its invaders before they landed : nor, even when the seven principalities were consolidated into one kingdom under Egbert, did that monarch, with all his sagacity, energy, and ambition, conceive the idea of meeting the ravagers of his dominions on the seas ; but he was content to combat them by land, though, when they were defeated and expelled, the booty which they had acquired was sufficient to tempt them to return ; as, in fact, they did year after year, keeping every part of the country in continual alarm. Ethelwolf succeeded Egbert ; and some writers have spoken of naval victories gained in his reign by Athelstan, whose relationship to the sovereign is variously stated. But the accounts of these achievements are so inconsistent, and in many particulars so obviously incredible, that it is safer to reject them altogether. If we do so, we must



then agree with those historians who teach us that Ethelwulf's youngest son, the great Alfred, was the first monarch who, after he had subdued Guthrum, and established tranquillity throughout the island, endeavoured to provide for its permanent security from foreign attack by building a fleet. The ships which he constructed with this view were of a larger size than any hitherto known; but so completely were the art of shipbuilding and the science of navigation still in their infancy, that these ships were propelled by oars only; sixty rowers being allotted to each, in the expectation that, with crews so numerous, they would prove, not only more manageable, but also more speedy than the sailing vessels of the Danes. So diligently did Alfred apply himself to this national object, as he justly considered it, that before his death he had created a fleet of a hundred and twenty ships, fully manned; distributing them in sufficient squadrons along those parts of the coast which experience had shown to be the most exposed to aggression: so that to his other titles to the respect and gratitude of posterity this also may be added, that he was the founder of the British navy.

As far as we can collect from the scanty accounts of the early chroniclers, who, being for the most part monks, were wholly ignorant of naval affairs, it is in Alfred's reign that the first victory was won that graces our naval annals: when, in 885, his fleet defeated a numerous host of Danish invaders off the coast of Essex. He was not, however, always the conqueror in such encounters; the very sailors who gained this victory were rendered by it so self-confident and careless that soon afterwards they were surprised and defeated by a fresh force from the same country, which arrived in the British seas before the end of the same summer. And for some years there were continual battles between the fleets of the two nations: the result of which was varied indeed and doubtful, if we regard the success of each separate conflict; but steady

and certain, if we view them in their more important consequence, the seamanship which the Britons were gradually acquiring, and the increased fondness for maritime pursuits which their increasing skill naturally engendered.

Great as was the reputation which Alfred's victories over Guthrum, and the still more redoubtable Hasting, won for him, he was by nature inclined to peace ; and, even, while occupied with his wars against the Danes, he found time to send out expeditions, with the combined objects of discovery and commerce, to the farthest point of the known world, the Indian seas. Even at that early period British sailors doubled the stormy cape at the extremity of Africa, the sight of which (so completely had all knowledge of their exploit been lost), six centuries afterwards, immortalised Bartholomew Diaz as its discoverer ; and, apparently with a view to similar enterprises in the north, he took great pains to collect all information then attainable respecting the Northern seas from Ohthere, a Danish sailor who had made extensive voyages in that direction.

His son Edward the Elder, and his grandson Athelstan, followed in his steps. They had discernment to perceive the importance of cherishing the growing inclination of their subjects for maritime affairs. The latter, though he was a prince of a more warlike disposition than his grandfather, further resembled him in preferring to employ his fleets rather in the pursuit of commercial advantage than in that of martial glory ; and, for the encouragement of a mercantile marine, established a regulation that any merchant who had made three sea-voyages on his own account, should, in virtue of them, be admitted to the rank of thane, a title previously confined to men of noble birth and extensive landed possessions. Thirty years after Athelstan's death, Edgar, uniting his passion for war with a desire to increase the commercial wealth of his people, applied himself to extirpating the pirates

who infested the various islands of the British seas ; but, singular as it may seem, his merit as an encourager of the navy is eclipsed by him who, of all the Saxon monarchs, was stigmatised by the most inglorious epithet, Ethelred the Unready. This king provided for the equipment and regular maintenance of a sufficient force, by an edict which enforced the duty of building a ship on every possessor of a certain quantity of land ; and so effectual was this measure, that the annalists of his reign relate that there had never been so great a number of ships in the time of any king in Britain : nor did he suffer them to rot in inaction, but, while his predecessors had been content with repelling invasion, he adopted the more manly policy of carrying the war into the enemy's country, sending out a powerful squadron to ravage the coast of Normandy. And, not long after this well-judged operation, he collected a larger fleet, consisting indeed, according to some accounts, of every seaworthy vessel in his possession, which he despatched to attack the Danes, who were lying at anchor, in fancied security, on the coast of Essex. Modern sailors will learn with some surprise that one of Ethelred's admirals was a prelate of the Church, Escwy, bishop of Dorsetshire. Treason marred the success of the British fleet, as Earl Alfrie, another of the commanders, deserted to the enemy ; but, notwithstanding this perfidy, so high was now the reputation of the British sailors, that the Danes feared to engage them, and fled by night, only to fall into the hands of a second fleet, described by Matthew of Westminster, as belonging to London, which entirely routed them ; according to the old chronicler, slaying many thousand men, and capturing the flagship of Alfrie, though that traitor himself escaped.

But these enterprises of Ethelred were hasty and feverish outbreaks, rather than the deliberate exertions of steady courage ; in spite of them the Danes gradually



established themselves as masters of the island; all resistance to them ceased; and for nearly half a century after his time history is silent as to the very existence of a British navy; the only circumstance connected with it which they relate being the presentation to Hardicanute by Earl Godwin of a galley of unparalleled magnificence, which the great earl had caused to be built as a specimen of the highest perfection to which the shipbuilders of that age could attain. This splendid vessel was propelled both by sails and oars; it had one tall mast, with a sail of purple silk, and a crew of eighty picked rowers, a number one-third larger than the crews of Alfred's ships, which, as we have already said, were the largest which had hitherto been seen in these northern waters. Some centuries were yet to elapse before any other improvements in shipbuilding were devised, beyond that which consisted in augmenting the size of the ships, and consequently the number of the crew.

But when the line of the Saxon monarchs was restored, even under the pusillanimous and contemptible Confessor, the kingdom again began to place its trust in its fleets. Magnus, king of Norway, claimed the throne by virtue of a treaty of succession which he had made with Hardicanute. But Edward, listening to the advice of Godwin, fitted out so formidable a Channel fleet that the Norwegian recoiled from a contest with it; and it was not till the King, lulled into a false security and yielding to the influence of less manly and perhaps less faithful counsellors, had disbanded his seamen, that a squadron of invaders ventured to approach our coasts, making one or two descents and retiring with the plunder.

The reign of Harold, short as it was, was yet distinguished by one naval victory. If we may believe the chroniclers, the fleet which Tostig's ally, Harold Harfager, brought from Norway, consisted of three hundred

sail ; and while he was encountering the Saxon Harold at Stamford Bridge, his son Olaf was engaged in a naval fight with the British admirals. Both conflicts were almost equally ruinous to the invaders : Harfager, as is well known, died on the field of battle, and Olaf was so utterly defeated that he was glad to purchase a safe return to Norway by the surrender of the greater part of his fleet. This victory was the last triumph of the Saxon kings : a few days afterwards a chance arrow-shot, piercing the brain of Harold, laid the kingdom at the feet of William of Normandy, who founded a new dynasty which, in spite of the changeful events of eight hundred years, cannot be said, even at this distance of time, to be entirely extinct, since the royal lady who now sits upon the throne is connected by no fictitious or ambiguous line of descent with the great Conqueror.

Under the Norman princes the British navy naturally became neglected. It had owed its origin to the necessity of protecting the kingdom from the invaders of the north ; and, now that the most formidable section of those invaders possessed the country, having also extensive dominions across the Channel, there was no quarter from which foreign attack could be apprehended ; while the task of consolidating their newly-acquired power, which for some time seemed but precarious, left William and his sons no leisure to seek fresh enemies by further aggression. It was nearly a century after the battle of Hastings before Henry II., being by Stephen's death secured in undisturbed possession of the English crown, began to turn his attention to projects of foreign conquest, and, with this view, to collect a navy, which, of course, was indispensable to the success of such enterprises. The maritime spirit of the English was only slumbering, and quickly awoke again at their sovereign's summons. Four hundred ships bore or escorted his army to the shores of Ireland, and, by overawing the people, greatly contributed

to its conquest. The same force aided Henry in gaining and keeping possession of the maritime provinces of France, the whole seaboard of which, from Calais to the Pyrenees, owned his sovereignty. And, if he has no naval victories of which to boast, it is only because his superiority by sea was so great that no other nation could venture to engage in a contest with him.

Richard was a military rather than a naval warrior; and the vast fleet which bore his banner to the Holy Land consisted more of transports than of ships of war, while even the finest of his vessels were greatly inferior to those of the Saracens. Some of Saladin's ships, indeed, were of a size hardly surpassed at the present day; one, the *Dromunda*, which was taken by the English, is described by contemporary historians as resembling a floating castle. It carried fifteen hundred men, and was looked upon by its barbarian crew as impregnable, and even unassailable. Secure from any missiles of that age it probably was; but the English sailors had already found out their superiority to all other nations in a hand-to-hand combat, and their irresistible prowess as boarders. They boarded the *Dromunda*, and carried her; and thenceforth Richard met with no molestation by sea.

John, though one of the meanest and most detestable of tyrants, was not deficient in ability, nor in a correct perception of the interests of his kingdom, nor even in resolution to promote those interests when their prosecution involved him in no personal danger. Accordingly he boldly asserted the English supremacy at sea, and enjoined the captains of the royal ships to compel all foreign vessels to strike their colours in homage to the English flag, an injunction which was rather the enforcement of an old than the assertion of a new claim. And subsequently, when Philip Augustus of France attacked his ally, the Count of Flanders, John sent the Earl of Salisbury, with a numerous fleet, to the Count's assistance.



Salisbury attacked the French fleet in the harbour of Dam, and captured or destroyed the whole of it, sending no less than three hundred of the finest ships to England as prizes. Such an example was not likely to be lost on the gallant and able guardians of John's youthful son, the Earl of Pembroke and Hubert de Burgh; and the first English victory gained in the open sea was achieved in the beginning of the reign of Henry III. Prince Louis, afterwards the eighth French sovereign of that name, was still striving to give effect to the liberality with which Pope Innocent, during his quarrel with John, had bestowed England on his father, by the subjugation of the kingdom; and, in the first year of young Henry's reign, having gone in person to France to collect reinforcements, he presently returned from Calais with a large army, convoyed by a magnificent fleet of eighty ships of war. Hubert de Burgh was himself governor of Dover, and he decided on encountering this formidable armament by sea, though the utmost force which he could assemble in the Cinque Ports did not amount to more than half the number of that under the command of the French prince. The two fleets met in the Straits of Dover, August 24, 1217. A great baron, Philip d'Albiny, is generally associated with Hubert in the glory of the day, which was attributable to the superior seamanship of the English as well as to their more resolute courage. Ships of war were still armed with strong sharp beaks, like the ancient galleys of the Romans and Carthaginians, and the most effective mode of attack still consisted in charging the hostile vessel, and piercing its side with their iron blows. The ships, too, were still propelled chiefly by oars, assisted by a sail when the wind was in their favour. The English admirals, resolved to employ both these means, by skilful manœuvres obtained the weather-gage; and thus bore down on the enemy with a force unexpected and irresistible. They had also devised

an additional and novel weapon of offence, which proved very effective: they had loaded their decks with barrels of unslaked lime, on which, as they neared the enemy, they poured sufficient water to slake the whole mass. The smoke thus created was borne by the wind into the faces of the French, and prevented them from seeing the operations of their assailants till it was too late to counteract them. They fled in confusion; and, though the superiority of their numbers protected them from any heavy loss, and though they effected a landing on the Kentish coast, burning Sandwich, and advancing to London, the battle had all the consequences of the most decisive victory: since it deprived Louis of all hope of obtaining any further reinforcements from France, and convinced those English barons who had hitherto adhered to his party of the hopelessness of his design to reduce this kingdom under his yoke. They hastened to make their peace with the King's government, and Louis was glad to purchase a safe return to his own country by a final renunciation of all his claims upon England.

Civil wars, by fixing the attention of the people on affairs within their own borders, naturally cause the neglect of their marine; and, as Henry's reign was a period of almost uninterrupted discord, the shipping interest fell so low that, in his latter years, the whole force that could be procured to convoy Prince Edward to the Holy Land consisted of no more than thirteen ships, the entire crews of which did not amount to a thousand men. But when Edward himself came to the throne this neglect was speedily repaired. He, the greatest of all our kings, perhaps the greatest who has ever swayed a sceptre, was a prince of a most warlike disposition, as well as of a most statesman-like judgment; and his wisdom coincided with his martial inclinations in prompting him to cherish that navy to whose deeds his father owed the single laurel that was wreathed around his brows. He



also triumphed at sea over the French ; and the battle which he gained is remarkable as an instance of a challenge deliberately given and accepted, which, if we look at the scale on which it was fought out, is without a parallel in history. Edward had reigned more than twenty years when, in the year 1295, the quarrels between our seamen of the Cinque Ports and the mariners of the opposite coast grew too violent for either party to be content with slight injuries and retaliations. The French hung some English sailors, who had fallen into their hands, by the side of dogs ; the English entered the French harbours, carried off what ships they could find, and flung the crews headlong into the sea. At last the two nations agreed to terminate their differences by a pitched battle : a day, the 14th of April, was appointed ; and a place, midway in the Channel, almost in the sight of both countries. The strength of the champion fleets was not limited ; and each was reinforced by all the allies whom hope of gain, national animosity, or love of enterprise could attract to the rival standards. Many Irish and Dutch vessels took part with the English sailors ; assistance even from the Mediterranean came to the French, whose ranks were strengthened by a squadron of Genoese, at that time one of the very first of maritime powers. Altogether the numbers of the French more than doubled those of the English vessels ; but the victory gained by the English was complete. Many of the French ships were sunk, and nearly all the rest, to the number, it is said, of two hundred and forty, were brought as prizes into the English harbours. The war thus kindled was prosecuted mainly on the same element on which it had been commenced ; the French soon repaired their losses, (ships that were counted by hundreds must manifestly have been such as were easily and quickly built) ; the very next year they equipped a fleet of three hundred sail, with which they made a descent on the

Kentish coast, and burnt Dover; the English in like manner destroyed Cherbourg. But both countries soon wearied of a war barren of political results, and, through the mediation of Pope Boniface, peace was concluded between them in 1303.

Edward died in 1307; and his unhappy son was too fully occupied by the internal troubles of his kingdom and his own family to have any leisure for foreign wars; but the reign of Edward III. was of a different character. We need not here recapitulate the circumstances under which he asserted his claim to the throne of France, nor the marvellous victories by land by which he almost succeeded in establishing it; but the triumphs of Crecy and Poitiers were preceded by one almost as decisive and glorious, gained at sea in front of the harbour of Sluys. Some naval enterprises on a small scale had already been undertaken, with alternate and fluctuating success, by both nations. A squadron of thirteen French vessels had defeated five English ships, and had taken two, the *Edward* and the *Christopher*, which appear to have belonged to the King himself; and, on another occasion, the same force had taken advantage of Edward's absence in Flanders to make a descent on our western coasts, burning Plymouth and threatening Bristol. The seamen of the Cinque Ports had crossed over to Boulogne with a flotilla, and had burnt the town, the arsenal, and all the ships that lay in the harbour, which the chroniclers, who have commemorated the exploit, divide into three classes: galleys, large ships, and smaller vessels. But the design of Edward to invade France in person threw all previous efforts into the shade. Sluys, lying at the western mouth of the Scheldt, was in those days, and for some generations later, a place of great importance as commanding the passage most in use between West Flanders and England; so completely, indeed, did it do so that, two centuries afterwards, the great Duke of

Parma considered its possession by his master indispensable to the success of his projected invasion of our shores. It possessed a harbour sufficiently capacious to hold a large fleet, with approaches so intricate and difficult that even a single vessel could hardly thread its way in without an experienced pilot. In front of this harbour, on the shelter of which he relied for eventual safety in the event of any disaster, Philip, king of France, had now stationed a fleet of four hundred sail, one hundred and twenty of which were large ships, that is to say emphatically ships of war, to intercept the English on their passage across the Channel. The masts of this mighty host so filled the arm of the river in which they lay that, according to Froissart's comparison, they looked like a wood. One squadron consisted of picked vessels from Genoa; and the reports of the magnitude of the armament, which speedily reached England, so alarmed the most experienced of the English knights that they implored their sovereign to desist from, or, at all events, to postpone his expedition. But neither the numbers nor the renown of his enemies, nor the manifest discouragement of his own men, could deter Edward from proceeding on his way, though he took time to collect a larger force than he had at first thought sufficient for his enterprise. So great was the diligence which his officers used, and so popular was the project of subduing France, that all the ports in the kingdom vied with one another in sending him reinforcements, so that in ten days he had as large a fleet as he required. Even then, according to the best accounts, the French outnumbered his vessels in the proportion of four to one; though other accounts raise his ships to two hundred and forty. Whatever their number was, it is certain that the English were greatly inferior to the French in this respect, and equally over-matched in the size of their vessels. However, such as his force was, Edward appeared with it in front of Sluys



on the 13th of June, 1340, and, without delay, attacked the enemy, who were fully prepared to receive him. The battle which ensued is remarkable as being the first in which the use of beaked vessels was laid aside; and in which the opposing fleets relied on other means of success than the mere impetuosity of their charge. Besides the crews employed in navigating the ships, bands of soldiers armed with bows, and, in some instances on board the foreign vessels, even with slings, were stationed at the head and stern, while the centre was, in many instances, occupied by catapults and arbalists, huge engines calculated for the discharge of more ponderous missiles, large darts, and heavy stones, with which the masts and sides of the ships themselves might be crushed or disabled. Edward was his own admiral, and the example of his dauntless courage stimulated his men to counterbalance the numerical superiority of their foes by extraordinary exertions. His archers cleared the decks of the French with their arrows, his men-at-arms boarded them; in an incredibly short time three-fourths of them had struck, and the darkness of the night alone enabled the remainder to escape up the Scheldt, whither the English, from ignorance of the navigation, were unable to follow them. The King was particularly gratified by the recovery of the Christopher, which was retaken almost at the beginning of the engagement, and was immediately remanned with drafts from some of his nearest ships, to continue the battle as one of the English fleet. It is said that nearly thirty thousand Frenchmen were slain. On board a single vessel, the Jacques of Dieppe, four hundred men were found dead when she surrendered to the Earl of Huntingdon. So great, and apparently so irretrievable, was the disaster, that none of Philip's councillors dared to reveal it to him; but they were forced to employ the Court fool to break the unwelcome tidings. That high officer accordingly took the opportunity of informing his

master that he looked upon the English as cowards ; and, when the gratified monarch asked what they had done to deserve such a reproach, he was told that they would not have had the courage to leap into the sea and be drowned, as the French had done when they had lost all their ships.

The same reign witnessed a conflict between us and another nation, already of considerable maritime reputation, which, before the end of the next century, they carried to a pre-eminent height. The year after his defeat at Sluys, Philip formed an alliance with the Spaniards, who at once sent a fleet into the Channel. But this accession of numerical strength brought him no amendment of his fortunes. The Spanish Admiral, Don Luis d'España, did, indeed, in 1343, fight one drawn battle with the English fleet under the Earl of Richmond ; the antagonists being separated by a violent storm before either could obtain any decisive advantage. But, in 1350, when his son, Don Carlos de la Cerda, entered the Channel, and threatened to requite the disaster of Crécy by an invasion of England, Edward took the command of his fleet in person, and, accompanied by the Black Prince, attacked him as he was sailing slowly along, with arrogant pride, in front of the Cinque Ports. In number the two fleets were very inferior to those which, ten years before, had fought at Sluys ; and in this respect, as afterwards in the time of the Armada, the English had apparently the advantage, bringing fifty vessels to encounter forty-four of the enemy. But now, too, as in that more celebrated struggle, the superior bulk of the Spanish ships far outweighed the numerical superiority of the British ; many of them looked like lofty castles beside the galleys and pinnaces which made up a great portion of Edward's force ; and, from their towering height, dropped huge beams and bars of iron among our crews ; but soon the unerring aim of the English bowmen, who fought here as on dry land, cleared the enemy's decks, and then

Edward and his knights, clambering up their sides, boarded them, and putting to death all who resisted, soon secured the victory. They took upwards of twenty ships, and would, probably, have captured all the rest, had not night intervened to save them. But though the victory was thus rendered less decisive than it might have been, enough had been done to show the Spaniards the impolicy of thrusting themselves into a quarrel in which they had no interest of their own, and the next year they made peace with Edward and left him to prosecute his war with Philip without any further molestation from them.

It is not worth while to enter into details concerning this and other battles which took place in this comparative early age of English History. The ships of modern times are so entirely different from those then in use; and consequently the whole system of naval tactics (if, indeed, anything deserving the name of a system then existed at all), has also been so completely remodelled, that no instruction could be derived from such details, even were we able to arrive at them with anything like accuracy. But, in fact, the ancient chroniclers were so ignorant of the science of war that but little confidence can be placed in the particulars which they have handed down to us. We must content ourselves with the general knowledge that, on this and almost all similar occasions, the odds were on the side of the French, and the victory was on that of the English; while even Philip's Genoese allies, however invincible in the Mediterranean, were forced to own that they had found their masters in the British Channel. Indeed, our most formidable enemies at sea at this period were the Scots, a captain of which nation, by name Mercer, having, in the reign of Richard II., collected a small squadron of privateers, greatly harassed our commerce, capturing some of our ships even under the walls of Scarborough Castle. And his success attracted to his command some allies from among the

French and Spanish seamen ; so that he gradually found himself at the head of a powerful fleet, with which he swept the North Sea, making many prizes. It is a curious instance of the weakness of our government, if indeed we may not rather say of all governments at that time, that his overthrow at last was owing, not to the exertions of any of the king's officers, but to the enterprise of a single merchant, John Philpot, an alderman of London ; who, at his own expense, fitted out an expedition against him, and defeated him, taking his entire squadron and all his prizes. Yet those in authority were so little inclined to see the duties which they themselves neglected performed by others, that Philpot was summoned before the King's Council, and had some difficulty in escaping punishment for his patriotic and beneficial, but illegal enterprise.



## CHAPTER II.

1400 — 1587.

Battle in Henry V.'s reign — Edward IV. owns ships — Henry VII. encourages discoverers — Sir John Cabot's voyage — The Great Harry — Battles in Henry VIII.'s reign — The fleet takes part in the battle of Pinkey — Sir Hugh Willoughby's voyage and loss — Accession of Elizabeth — Drake's first voyage — His voyage round the world — His two expeditions against Spain — Elizabeth's ingratitude.

IN those ages, whenever any great achievement was intended, the sailors employed in working the ship were not expected, as a general rule, to concern themselves with the fighting. We have already seen one instance of this fact in the battle of Sluys; and, in the great naval battle in the reign of Henry V. by which the King's brother, the Duke of Bedford, compelled the French to raise the siege of Harfleur, the fighting portion of the British crews consisted of twenty thousand men, drawn from the royal army, and embarked on board the fleet, for the express purpose of the expected battle. This transference of the land force to the sea proved wholly successful, for, though the Genoese had furnished their French allies with vessels of a size never previously seen outside the Pillars of Hercules, yet their combined fleets were entirely defeated with a loss of five hundred vessels, among which were many of the Genoese ships. After the death of Henry V. we hear but little of our navy for some time. The war which ensued, and which ended in the expulsion of the English from France, was carried on solely by land; and, after its termination, the internal troubles which agitated the two kingdoms left them no leisure to harass one another. When, however, at last Edward IV. obtained undisputed possession of the throne, we find

traces of an increase of the royal navy, since one of Edward's letters contains an enumeration of six ships belonging to himself, the *Grace à Dieu*, the *Henry*, the *Anthony*, the *Portingale*, the *Spagnard*, and the *Henry Aske*. These vessels appear to have been designed for commercial and warlike uses indifferently; and, in point of fact, they were never employed by Edward in war.

When the wars of the Roses were finally terminated, by the accession of Henry VII., that sagacious but penurious monarch was, both by his sagacity and his economy, prompted rather to encourage the peaceful operations of commerce than to engage in war. He himself, during his residence in Brittany, had acquired a greater knowledge of naval affairs than had been possessed by any of his predecessors on the throne; and the reputation of this knowledge, and also of his preference for peaceful over warlike aggrandizement, allured to his court more than one of those great adventurers whose discoveries in a new hemisphere were destined to have so great an influence on the subsequent history of the Old World. Columbus, when repulsed by the King of Portugal, sent his brother Bartholomew to England to unfold to Henry his projects and his hopes: and it is probable that it was merely the accident of the messenger being captured by pirates on his way, that prevented that most successful and most illustrious of explorers from making his discoveries in the service of England instead of in that of Castile. A few years later, the Venetian sailor, Sir John Cabot, was actually employed by Henry in a similar enterprise; with an English squadron he discovered Newfoundland and St. John's, which still belong to the British Crown: and, in 1497, he reached the mainland of America, to which Columbus himself at that time had never penetrated. These enterprises, however, glorious and useful as they were, can hardly be said to have been achieved by the

British navy; and consequently are not entitled to any fuller detail here, at the same time that they are too important in themselves, and have too intimate a connection with subsequent events, to be passed over wholly without notice. It is more to the purpose of the present work to record that, pacific as Henry was, he nevertheless perceived the impropriety of the King of England being destitute of a fleet of his own. Apparently the ships of Edward IV. were worn out, we know for certain that the *Grace à Dieu* was; so that, if war should arise, it seemed that he would be forced, like his predecessors, to rely wholly on vessels impressed from his own merchants or hired from foreign powers. To remedy this state of things, Henry resolved to build some ships for himself, to be used solely as ships of war. The custom had already grown up, which has continued to our own day, of retaining old names; and accordingly, in recollection of Edward the Fourth's vessel, Henry's largest vessel was called the *Harry Grace à Dieu*; though she was more generally known as the *Great Harry*. On the accession of Henry VIII. her name was changed to the *Regent*; but when, a few years afterwards, she was burnt in an engagement with the French, the ship built in her place resumed its old name, and became a second *Great Harry*. Her size and equipment are minutely recorded. She was of a thousand tons' burden, and her crew consisted of seven hundred men. The number of her men, it will at once be seen, was out of all proportion to that which a ship of her size would carry now. And, according to the reckoning of that day, her armament was equally disproportioned to her size, for the returns reckon her guns at one hundred and twenty-two; but the greater part of them were what were called falcons, falconets, serpentines, and rabinets: each name indicating the size of the ball the gun carried, and which varied from one to two pounds. The larger guns, which alone correspond to those which we now

reckon as part of a ship's armament, and of which she had thirty-four, were called culverins, or eighteen-pounders, and demi-culverins, which were nine-pounders.

Though Henry VII. had thus built ships of war, he never employed them in any martial enterprises ; he was quite content with the belief in his power which they created among foreign nations ; and it is characteristic of his disposition and habits that he soon began to turn the tables on his merchants, and to make his new fleet pay for itself, by letting out to them his ships, as fast as they were built, as escorts for their trading vessels, and exacting large sums for the protection thus afforded them.

The improvements that had been made in naval architecture since the fourteenth century were considerable : instead of one mast, which was the utmost possessed by any of Edward the Third's ships, the Great Harry had four besides the bowsprit, which was commonly called a fifth mast. The forecastle, the name of which was accurately descriptive of the lofty structure then in use at the head of the vessel, was introduced as a means of defence, rather than of offence. Cannon, too, became part of a ship's armament ; the larger vessels being furnished with a double row of portholes, which had lately been invented by Descharges, a shipwright of Brest.

His taste for grandeur and show of all kinds led Henry VIII. to strive to outdo his father ; and he built many vessels equal, and even superior in size, to the Great Harry, though the largest of them were still inferior to some of the French vessels, one of which, the Cordelier, had a crew of above twelve hundred men. He deserves still more praise for his introduction of a new custom, which, above all others, was indispensable to the real efficiency of a naval force, the establishment of an order of officers, who should be confined to the sea service. At a later period, in the time of the Commonwealth and of Charles II., we shall find this rule neglected for a short



time ; and at first it was not strictly observed by Henry himself, since one of his first admirals, Sir Thomas Howard, afterwards Duke of Norfolk, took an active part in the great battle of Flodden, and in one or two expeditions on the continent ; but these have been only rare exceptions to a rule of great practical wisdom, which Henry is fully entitled to the credit of having been the first sovereign in Christendom to establish.

There were one or two battles with the French in this reign, but they were of no great consequence, though one of them was remarkable for the death of the French Admiral, and of the English second in command, Sir Thomas Knevit. Knevit's ship, the *Regent*, grappled the French flagship, the huge *Cordelier*, and, in the fierce contest which ensued, the two vessels took fire, and were burnt with their commanders and all their crews. A subsequent battle was also signalised by a singular misfortune, in the drowning of our High Admiral, Sir Edward Howard, the first officer on whom that rank was ever conferred. He also had grappled the vessel of the French Commander-in-chief, and had himself led the boarders ; but, by some accident, in the course of the conflict the ships became disentangled, and he and the small band which had followed him into the French ship were easily overpowered by the crew, who, having no suspicion of the rank of their principal assailant, threw them all into the sea. Sir Edward Howard was a skilful seaman, and a man of the most dauntless courage, which he is said to have justified by a saying which was often in the mouth of one of the most gallant officers\* of modern times, that "a sailor, to be good for anything, must be nearly mad."

Something also King Henry's ships found to do in our own island. One of Sir Edward Howard's most difficult enterprises was the destruction of a celebrated Scotch freebooter, Andrew Barton, who with two privateers,

\* The late Lord Dundonald.

the *Lion* and the *Jenny Perwin*, had long ravaged the northern coast of England, and harassed our merchants and traders with impunity. And in the next reign the active use which the admiral, Lord Clinton, made of his fleet greatly contributed to the decisive character of the battle of Pinkey, which was fought so close to the shore that the Scotch army was exposed to the fire of the English ships. Even in Mary's unhappy reign the spirit of naval enterprise was not wholly extinguished, though the most memorable event connected with our marine was a great calamity, which has had its melancholy counterpart in our own days. A gallant knight, of high reputation for personal prowess, Sir Hugh Willoughby, set forth at the head of a small squadron, in the hope of discovering a shorter passage to China and India through the sea which bounds the northern frontier of Europe and Asia. A path to those countries had already been sought for in the north-west : but Willoughby had conceived the idea that the waters of the north-east offered a fairer prospect of success ; and, with the approval of Sebastian Cabot, whom he consulted, he resolved on seeking the desired passage in that direction. He sailed due north, discovered Spitzbergen, and reached the seventy-second degree of north latitude ; then, finding himself icebound, the winter of that year being one of not only extraordinary, but also of premature severity, he sought shelter, with two of his ships, in the mouth of the river Arzina, in Lapland, hoping to be able to remain there in safety till the return of spring. When that spring arrived some Russian fishermen found him and all his crew starved and frozen to death. Those who recollect the anxiety with which tidings of Sir John Franklin were so long looked for, and the general sorrow felt by the nation when his sad fate was ascertained, will not refuse their sympathy to the fate of that equally gallant and equally unfortunate sailor, who three centuries before, met with similar destruction in a similar enterprise.

The only warlike operation in which Mary's fleet was engaged was attended with better success, though that success was far from gratifying to her people, being gained in the cause of her husband Philip, whose character and whose objects were alike detested by them. The victory gained at Gravelines by his general, Count Egmont, who in subsequent years met with so ungrateful a requital at his hands, was greatly owing to the effective aid which the English ships gave the Spaniards during the battle, which like that of Pinkey, was fought so close to the shore that the contending armies were within gunshot of our fleet which was cruising off the Flemish coast, and was attracted to the scene of action by the sound of the long cannonade.

Very different from the reign of Mary was that of Elizabeth, both in its character and its events. And in no particular has it more stamped its own features on succeeding generations, than in the conduct of our naval affairs. The principle established by the queen's father began to bear fruit; and we now meet with a succession of officers, from their boyhood inured to the sea, and thoroughly imbued with the nautical skill and daring which were the natural fruit of such early training. The most illustrious of these professional sailors was Sir Francis Drake, whose history is a singular specimen of the times in which he lived, and of the men whom those times produced. His first expedition was made under the command of a relation, who subsequently became almost as famous as himself, Sir John Hawkins. Hawkins was a slave-trader; but the slave trade in those days entailed no infamy on those who followed it. Drake, however, became disgusted with the slave-trade, and quitted it to turn pirate; for piracy, also, was then far from being accounted discreditable, when practised upon a nation held in disfavour amongst one's own countrymen; when its enterprises coincided with the secret wishes of those countrymen



and their sovereign, it was even esteemed patriotic and laudable. And such were Drake's achievements. There was, indeed, peace in form between Spain and England ; but no two sovereigns had ever hated one another more than Philip and Elizabeth. The British Queen had put down Philip's religion in England, so he loathed her as a heretic ; she had rejected his suit of love, offered when her sister's ashes were hardly cold, so he hated her as a scornful mistress ; and she regarded him with a mixture of fear and hatred as the champion of those whom she detested, the oppressor of those whom her policy made her wish to see independent. In Spain or in Flanders Philip was invulnerable to her assaults, even had she thought it prudent to deliver any ; but across the Atlantic he had vast colonies and settlements, too extensive for him to protect, and rich enough to tempt aggression. Across the Atlantic then, in May, 1572, Drake made his way, to seek riches from the Spanish settlements in America ; but the force which he took with him, were it not for the use which he made of it, would only provoke ridicule at the present day. His own ship, the *Pascha*, was of seventy tons' burden, with a crew of forty-seven men ; her comrade, the *Swanne*, was of twenty-five tons' burden, and her sailors were twenty-six. Even of this handful of men, above one-third died of sickness on their passage, and among them his brother, Joseph Drake : yet with the survivors he attacked *Nombre de Dios* and other Spanish towns on the Isthmus of Darien ; plundered several trains of mules heavily laden with treasure from the Mexican mines ; took or destroyed several Spanish vessels, the smallest of which was larger than his own *Pascha* ; and returned home, after a prosperous voyage of fourteen months, to prepare for a fresh expedition on a more extensive scale. For, from a high tree on the Isthmus of Panama which he had climbed, he had seen the Pacific, and had bound himself by a vow to sail a ship upon its

waters ; and the riches which he had acquired in his first expedition enabled him to look forward to the speedy accomplishment of his vow.

Undoubtedly he considered the squadron he now proceeded to fit out fully adequate to the greater enterprise which he projected, and he was four entire years equipping it : yet it consisted but of five vessels, ranging from one hundred down to fifteen tons, while the entire complement of all their crews amounted to no more than one hundred and sixty-three men. It was in November, 1577, that he set forth on this his great expedition, which entitles him to the honour of having been the first Englishman who circumnavigated the globe. Brazil was the first land that he reached in the New World ; then, stretching down along the South American coast, he successfully traversed the Straits of Magelhaens, but soon afterwards lost one of his ships and was separated from the rest in a violent storm which drove the whole squadron down to the south of Cape Horn. The rest of his voyage he performed without any comrade : yet, with his single ship, the name of which, on entering the Pacific, he had changed from the *Pelican* to the *Golden Hind*, he proceeded to attack the Spanish settlements on the Peruvian coast with as much boldness as if he had had a fleet at his back. He even entered the port of Callao, and plundered seventeen vessels, which he found there, of vast quantities of the precious metals. He captured ship after ship which he fell in with at sea, the greater part of them being heavily freighted with gold, silver, and jewels ; and then after devoting a short time to the repair of his own vessel, he proceeded along the coast of North America, hoping to find an eastward channel round the northern extremity of the American continent, that would conduct him back to England. He judged rightly that this continent was bounded by the sea throughout its whole length ; and he could not know, what indeed has only been completely ascertained by the present genera-

tion, that an almost uninterrupted band of ice shuts up those frozen waters with an impassable barrier. He did not, however, advance beyond the district now known as California (the summer of 1579 proved unusually cold and stormy); and, after taking possession of that district in the Queen's name, with all the customary formalities, and giving it the name of New Albion, he renounced his original plan, and sailed westward for England, touching at the Philippine Islands, and Java; rounding the Cape of Good Hope, and then keeping close to the African shore till he reached Sierra Leone. At last, in September, 1580, he arrived in safety at Plymouth, which one of his comrades, Captain Winter, of the *Elizabeth*, the second ship of his original squadron, had reached some time earlier.

He had brought back greater riches than before, and was received with high honour in his native county of Devonshire. But, after a short delay in the west, he sailed round to the Thames; and there he found those in authority greatly doubting what countenance to show him: since, though they had but little objection to piracy in the abstract, they saw great danger lest Drake's particular enterprise might breed war betwixt England and Spain; and such a war, whatever might be its issue, would certainly ruin our trade with that country, then the richest in the world. This argument had great weight with Elizabeth, who was also inclined, at all times, to disapprove of anything that was done without express authority from herself; but, at last, the reasoning of Drake's friends in his defence, joined to her own invincible suspicion and dislike of Philip, prevailed over the opposite considerations. She paid Drake a visit on board the *Golden Hind*, knighted him, and bade his ship be preserved as a memorial of his unparalleled achievement. That little bark, which had "put a girdle round the earth," in accordance with her royal injunction, was preserved at Deptford as long as repairs could enable it



to hold together ; but in the course of a century decay rendered all further maintenance of its original form impossible, it was broken up, and there remained only so much sound timber as sufficed to make a chair. The chair was presented by Charles II. to the University of Oxford, where it is still preserved as an honoured memorial of an enterprise which, both in the hardihood which conceived it and in the skill which executed it, is scarcely surpassed by any other of its age, fertile as that age was in heroic spirits and glorious exploits.

The honours conferred by Elizabeth on Captain, now Sir Francis Drake, removed all stigma from his past proceedings, which it placed under the sanction and protection of the nation. She also gave him a commission as admiral, thus pledging herself, in some degree, to protect him in his future undertakings. And, four years afterwards, she conferred on him the command of a fleet, which she had fitted out, with the avowed purpose of striking a blow at Philip ; though, even yet, there had been no formal declaration of war between the two countries. The force now placed under his command was very different from any that he had hitherto led. It consisted of twenty ships ; his own flag flying on board the *Elizabeth*, a fine vessel of nine hundred tons' burden ; and his vice-admiral being Frobisher, already distinguished for the skill and resolution which he had displayed as an explorer of the Northern Seas, and destined subsequently to reap yet greater glory by his present commander's side in the destruction of the Armada. Still of these twenty only four were ships of war ; the remainder being transports for the conveyance of an army of two thousand men who formed part of the expedition. They sailed from Plymouth in the autumn of 1585 ; and now Drake did not wait to cross the Atlantic, but made straight for Spain itself. His first point was Vigo, where he took a number of vessels ; from thence he pro-

ceeded against the magnificent island of Hispaniola, made himself master of its capital St. Domingo, which he allowed the citizens to ransom from destruction for twenty-five thousand ducats, quickening their zeal by burning a portion of the city every morning till they agreed to his terms. Proceeding onwards to the American continent, he treated Carthagena in the same manner, and then visited Virginia, where Raleigh had lately planted a colony. Drake had proposed to strengthen the settlers with some reinforcements from his own squadron; but he found them so disgusted with the country, and with the hardships which they had experienced during their sojourn in it, that they were resolved to leave it; and, at their earnest entreaty, he gave them (they were only one hundred and three persons) a passage to England, where they all arrived in the summer of 1586.

The next year he was sent on a still more important expedition; more important both in respect of the force placed under his command and also of the great object it had in view. For Philip had addressed a formal remonstrance to Elizabeth on the subject of Drake's attacks upon his ships and his American provinces; and his purpose to avenge himself by an invasion of England was no secret: indeed, he had already laid an embargo on all English ships, goods, and men in his harbour; and certain information had been received that vast preparations of every kind were being made in the Spanish ports. Drake, ever desirous of action, proposed to scotch the snake while still in its hole. And the Queen eagerly approved of the plans which he submitted to her, gave him a squadron of four of her finest ships, and encouraged him to apply to "her good city of London" for the rest of the fleet which he required. The London merchants, as they nobly showed in the following year, were not without zeal for the public service; they had also keen eyes for a promising speculation; and both



motives combined to urge them to join liberally in Drake's venture. They furnished him with twenty ships; he obtained one or two more from other quarters, and in April, 1587, he proceeded with eight-and-twenty sail down the Channel. He had passed Cape Finisterre, and was sailing down the Atlantic, at some distance from the Spanish coast, when he spoke two Scotch vessels which gave him information of preparations going on at Cadiz, which at once decided him to steer for that port. He lost no time. On the 19th of April, the third day after he had received the intelligence, he entered Cadiz harbour, silenced twelve galleys which attacked him, and drove them to seek shelter under the guns of the castle; and then he proceeded to capture and destroy all the other vessels in the harbour. So great was their number that, though he and his men worked day and night, it was not till the third day that they had finished their work of destruction. By that time they had scuttled or burnt above one hundred and fifty ships, many of them of the largest size then known. Some were magnificently equipped with as many as forty large brass guns; some were laden with cargoes of exceeding value. The plunder of every kind he removed on board his own squadron. From Cadiz he proceeded to Lisbon, for Portugal had recently been annexed by Philip to Spain. At Lisbon he made almost equal havoc; and finding that the Marquis of Santa Cruz, the High Admiral of Spain, was in that city, he invited him to come forth and fight in the open sea. The marquis declined the challenge, but was so chagrined at the destruction which he had witnessed, no small portion of which had fallen upon himself personally, since some of the finest vessels which had been burnt had been his own property, that he fell ill and died soon afterwards. Drake's good fortune was not yet over. He was returning home, every ship laden with booty, when he fell in with a merchantman from

the East Indies, a carrack, as such vessels were called, with a most rich and costly cargo. She had no choice but to surrender ; and with this additional prize he returned to Plymouth. While enriching himself, he had done his country a great service ; he had, to use his own expression, “singd the king of Spain’s beard” in a fashion to which His Majesty was but little accustomed. By the destruction of ships and stores destined for the invasion of England he had postponed that danger for some months. What was still more important in its bearing on the impending struggle, he had shown the English seamen that the superior size of the Spanish vessels did not render them invincible ; that in some respects their bulk was even a hindrance to their usefulness ; and that, at all events, the superiority of English to Spanish sailors far more than counterbalanced the superiority of Spanish to English ships. Yet so far was he from being rewarded for this great service, that on his return he found himself and his exploits disavowed by his own sovereign. So numerous were Elizabeth’s acts of duplicity and baseness, and so far more important were many of the cases in which they were displayed, that this instance has almost escaped notice. She had shown the greatest eagerness, consistent with her unvarying parsimony, to promote the sailing of Drake’s expedition ; she had taken care to secure to herself an ample share of the profits expected from it : yet, because Philip and his agents had deluded her with a prospect of peace, which must have been most inglorious for her, and could not possibly have been lasting, she now declared her disapprobation of Drake’s actions ; assured Philip that all that he had done had been done in disobedience to her positive injunctions ; and she made a merit with the Spaniard, who was ceaselessly plotting her destruction, of showing the greatest displeasure against Drake, and an intention, only with difficulty to be averted, of punishing him as he deserved.

## CHAPTER III.

1588—1602.

The Armada—Elizabeth's dilatoriness and parsimony in preparing to meet it—It sails—Puts back in a storm—Sails again—Reaches the Channel—The battles between it and Lord Howard's fleet—It is attacked by fireships in Calais Roads—Its defeat and destruction—Subsequent expeditions in Elizabeth's reign—Lord Howard destroys the ships at Cadiz—Lord Essex—Raleigh—Cavendish—Davis.

THE next year she was compelled, in spite of herself, to estimate his merits differently. Throughout the winter Philip amused her with negotiations for peace, which her parsimony and her vanity beguiled her shrewdness into trusting; while, in fact, he was preparing a great twofold attack upon her. A vast fleet, to which, in his pride, he had given the name of the Invincible Armada, was to sail from the harbours of Spain: an equally formidable army, under the command of the Duke of Parma, the greatest general who at that time had appeared in modern Europe, was to join it from the Netherlands, when it should reach the British Channel. Yet it was not till the Armada was ready to sail, and Parma's legions were marshalled on the Flemish coast, waiting for the fleet to escort them to the conquest of her kingdom, that Elizabeth would listen to the remonstrances of her bravest officers or of her wisest statesmen. Fortunately she had statesmen and officers equal to any emergency. In the last year of her reign, Mary had appointed Lord William Howard, High Admiral of England; and, on his death, Elizabeth had conferred his post on his son Charles, better known as Lord Howard of Effingham. He was not an experienced



sailor, but still he had qualities which rendered him eminently fit for such an office at such a time ; for he was a high-spirited, fearless, liberal man, largely endowed with the tact and temper necessary for gaining the confidence of those under his command. He was, in fact, a fine and genuine relic and specimen of the ancient chivalry, when great lords and princes thought the most valuable privilege of their nobility was the right which it gave them to be the first in devoting their treasures and their lives to the service of their country. It was well for the nation that, at such a crisis, she had such a man in such a place. For, while Elizabeth was complacently listening to the protestations of the Spanish negociators, the rumour of the attack which was being prepared to overwhelm her grew day by day more frequent and more circumstantial ; and Howard was among the first to apprehend the danger in its full extent, while he was high and powerful enough to dare to speak his mind, and to press unwelcome truths on his royal mistress, who was not always patient of remonstrance. Even now the entire number of ships belonging to the English crown did not exceed thirty-four, nor were they all manned or ready for sea ; yet, with those which he could collect, Lord Howard, at the first approach of spring, began to cruise up and down the Channel, professing his willingness, if it must be so, to encounter the whole brunt of the expected enemy, with even four-and-twenty ships ; but still unceasingly urging upon the Queen and her ministers the imminence of the danger, and the inadequacy of all the means that were as yet being employed to repel it ; assuring her that Philip was sparing neither money, nor ships, nor men, and that “ sparing and war had no affinity together.” \*

Slowly and reluctantly did Elizabeth consent to incur

\* Letter of Lord Howard to Walsingham, April 7, 1588, quoted by Motley, to whose admirable account of the preparation and destruction of the Armada, I have been greatly indebted in this chapter.



the expense so earnestly demanded of her. At last, however, she did permit all her own ships to be equipped, and demands to be made on those other bodies who were wont to furnish the requisite aid in time of need. They nobly answered the call thus made on them. The city of London, which was asked for fifteen ships and five thousand men, gave double the number. Plymouth and other cities followed the example of the metropolis. Volunteers came in, of all classes and from all quarters; till, by the end of June, a fleet of nearly two hundred vessels was collected, though some of them were so small as not to exceed thirty tons' burden: indeed the tonnage of the entire fleet fell short of thirty thousand tons, and their guns, of every calibre, did not amount to one thousand. Yet even this force (insufficient as it might have been thought, had it not been for the event of the contest), was very nearly being too late for the salvation of the kingdom; for the last ships of the Armada had quitted Lisbon on the 30th of May, and on that day the whole of that mighty armament was hastening towards our shores in full assurance of an easy triumph. In one respect it was unfortunate, even before it sailed. As has been already mentioned, the Marquis of Santa Cruz, the most renowned sailor in Spain, who had gained great honours in the battle of Lepanto, and who had been appointed to command the Armada, in the confident expectation that its exploits would crown the fame he had already acquired, had died in the course of the past winter, and his place had been supplied by the Duke of Medina Sidonia, a gallant noble, worthy, as far as courage went, of the best days of Spain, but ignorant of nautical affairs. Still he had many skilful sailors and intrepid commanders under him; and, as Santa Cruz had ever been more distinguished for prudence than for daring, perhaps, against such antagonists as were awaiting the Armada, the difference between the two commanders was

not so great as it seemed. At all events, the force now sailing up the Portuguese coast appeared so overpowering in the eyes of those who had sent it forth, that no difference of skill could counterbalance its superiority. In the mere number of vessels, indeed, it did not exceed, nor even equal, the fleet that was eventually arrayed under the command of Lord Howard. The invaders were one hundred and thirty-six, while the English at last reckoned above one hundred and ninety vessels;\* but while some of ours were scarcely larger than boats, the very smallest of the Spanish ships was of three hundred tons' burden, a size not exceeded by above thirty of Lord Howard's whole fleet. Their entire tonnage was double that of the English. The number of their crews was double. Their guns not only doubled ours in number, but were for the most part of far heavier calibre than the largest ever at that time used in a British ship.

Before the end of May this huge fleet was hastening to destroy us. Surely we may say, without arrogance, that Providence on this occasion watched over England. Had the Spaniards had an ordinary passage, they would have come upon us when we were but half-prepared; when scarcely half his fleet had joined the intrepid but almost despairing Howard. But many of the Spanish vessels were so large as to be unwieldy and unmanageable. They were three weeks reaching Cape Finisterre; and off that dangerous promontory they met with such a storm that they were forced to put into Corunna (the Groyne as it was called in those days) to refit. Thus three weeks more were spent, so that it was the 12th of July before the Armada again set forth; and by this time the English ships had all joined the Admiral, and were zealously training themselves for the coming conflict. Yet the parsi-

\* This is Motley's account. Charnock, who represents some of the Spanish vessels as not exceeding sixty tons' burden, nevertheless makes the tonnage of the entire fleet amount to nearly seventy thousand tons: Motley states it at fifty-nine thousand one hundred and twenty tons.

mony of the Queen had almost turned this bounty of Providence to her own and her kingdom's ruin. The news of the disasters sustained by the Armada off Cape Finisterre, and of its subsequent retirement to the Spanish harbours, had reached her ; and, hastily concluding that no further attempt would be made that summer, she sent peremptory orders to Howard to pay off the largest of his ships. He, with more liberality and better judgment, disobeyed the order ; stating his reasons for his disobedience in a most statesmanlike letter, and offering, if they should appear insufficient, to keep the ships afloat at his own expense. The letter had hardly been despatched, when intelligence reached him that the Armada was within sight of our shores. It had sailed again from the Groyne on the 12th of July, and, having now met with a fair wind, arrived off the Lizard on the 19th of the same month. Howard was in Plymouth with the principal division of his fleet when the news reached him, and fortunately the most gallant and experienced of his subordinate officers were with him. His own flag was flying in the *Ark Royal*, not the largest, but in his judgment, the handiest ship in the whole fleet. Drake, as Vice-Admiral, or second in command, was in the *Revenge*. Sir John Hawkins was Rear-Admiral, or third in command ; his ship was the *Victory*. Frobisher had the largest ship of all, the *Triumph*, of eleven hundred tons and forty-two guns. With these, and the rest of his squadron, sixty-seven vessels in all, Howard at once put to sea ; and on Sunday, the 21st, he came up with the enemy a little to the westward of Plymouth. It was an imposing, and to any but English sailors a fearful sight, that was presented by the stately Armada as it swept slowly up the Channel in an enormous crescent, full seven miles long ; half the vessels too rose out of the water to a height which had never been seen by the majority of our English sailors, looking, to use the language of a contem-



porary writer, like "so many immense floating castles, under which the very sea appeared to groan, as it were, in complaint of the unusual burden it was made to bear."

Howard, however, was not daunted; and Drake had already proved in action that the bulk of the Spanish vessels were more formidable in appearance than in reality. They at once attacked the Armada: not, indeed, at close quarters, but, having obtained the weather-gage, they cannonaded it from a distance, inflicting much damage, and receiving none. In this manner a running fight was kept up in sight of the shore; the Spaniards slowly moving onwards, and the English firing into their rearmost divisions. Before night the flagship of the Guipuscoan squadron had blown up; and that of Valdez, the ablest sailor in the Armada, was so much disabled that it struck at daybreak the next morning. The next day the fight continued in the same manner; the Duke of Medina made a new arrangement of his rear, and sent officers of his staff with executioners on board every ship in the fleet, with instructions at once to hang any captain who should quit the post assigned to him. But none of his officers were able to bring the English admirals to close quarters: our lighter and more manageable vessels advancing or retreating at pleasure, and keeping up from time to time an occasional fire, which the enemy was wholly unable to return with the least effect. The third day, Tuesday, the 23rd, this aspect of affairs was somewhat changed. The wind, which had been westerly, shifted to the north-east; and, as this gave the Spaniards the weather-gage, they were also able to get nearer to our vessels, though our seamen still displayed such a superiority of skill as baffled all their attempts to grapple with and board us. The gunnery on both sides was bad, and but little damage was done in proportion to the fire which was incessantly kept up by both till our ammunition began to fail. By this time the rival fleets had reached the Dorsetshire coast,



and all day fresh vessels kept flocking in to join Howard, and boats full of men, provisions, and ammunition reinforced the ships already engaged. When on the 25th the two fleets reached the Isle of Wight, Howard had a hundred sail under his command; and on this day the battle was fiercer than it had yet been. The wind continuing easterly enabled the enemy to bring on a conflict at very short ranges, and for a time Frobisher and Lord Howard, who came to his assistance, were in some danger; but, after a while, they beat off their assailants. And though the *Ark Royal* had been so crippled in her rigging that she was obliged to be towed out of action, the Spaniards had suffered more, the greater size of their ships making them a far easier mark for our gunners than our ships afforded to theirs. We still continued to receive reinforcements, and thus gained strength as we pursued, till on Saturday, the 27th, the Armada reached Calais Roads, where it anchored: Medina Sidonia hoping now to be speedily joined by the Duke of Parma and his army. But the Dutch looked upon their own safety as depending almost equally with ours on the result of this contest, and they blockaded Parma in the Scheldt so completely that he was unable to get out; and, though chafing at his absence, and loudly accusing him of treachery, and even of cowardice, the Admiral obtained not the help on which he had depended, and which every day showed him more clearly to be indispensable for his success, if not for his safety. Meanwhile Howard, who had now been joined by Lord Henry Seymour and the squadron which was lying in the Downs, anchored a short distance outside the Spaniards, and held a council with his officers to decide what step he should take next; for he was not aware of the success with which the Dutch had cut off Parma from the open sea, and was now momentarily expecting the Armada to be strengthened by the formidable host, and still more formidable skill, of that

invincible commander. Sir William Winter suggested the employment of fireships, and the design was no sooner broached that it was adopted. A few of the most worthless vessels were loaded in haste with the most combustible matter that could be procured ; and at midnight, on the 28th were rowed silently into Calais harbour, and were set on fire in the midst of the Armada, before their approach or even their existence was suspected. In a fleet so densely packed, for the narrowness of the harbour had compelled the ships to lie close together, the damage inflicted was necessarily great, and the terror and confusion far exceeded the damage. Some of the Spaniards caught fire ; the rest cut their cables, and, fleeing in the darkness, got entangled and wrecked against one another. The Duke, who amid that scene of alarm preserved his presence of mind, sought in vain to check the panic and to preserve order ; but the instinct of self-preservation overpowered all the restraints of discipline, and all the habits of obedience : his commands were disregarded, and presently he was compelled to flee with the rest. By daybreak the whole Armada was moving towards Dunkirk, still hoping to effect a junction with the army. Howard, with every vessel he had, by this time they amounted to a hundred and fifty sail, pressed after it in vigorous pursuit, and by the time it reach Gravelines had fully overtaken it. One great galleasse, the St. Laurence, the flagship of Don Hugo de Monçada, was captured before she got out of Calais, though her captors were forced to give her up to the French governor of the town, who claimed her as still lying within his jurisdiction ; but there was no one to interfere between the English fleet and the rest of their prey. Before noon, encouraged by the disaster, and manifest consternation of the enemy, we had attacked them at all points. Every admiral led his squadron ; and Howard, Drake, Frobisher, Hawkins, Seymour, and Winter vied with one another who should

be most conspicuous to his own honour, and most successful to the glory of their country. They no longer refused to come to close quarters ; but ranged up within speaking distance, and poured an incessant fire into the sides of the huge galleons, which, in return, fired over the heads of their dwarfish antagonists, with so little effect that the whole of our loss that day did not amount to a hundred men : the Spanish loss was computed at five thousand. Of their ships only one or two were captured, but three were sunk ; many more were wholly disabled, and, drifting before the tide and a freshening north-westerly breeze, were wrecked on the Flemish coast ; while, even of those which still could keep the sea, the greater portion were so crippled as to be unequal to any further contest, either with us or with the elements, the rising gale, and the fatal leeshore, the shoals, and sandbanks of Holland on which it was rapidly driving them. From any repetition of our attacks they were spared by our want of ammunition. All Lord Howard's entreaties had not prevailed on the Queen to furnish the fleet as such a struggle really required. Already in the preceding week the Spaniards had once obtained a momentary respite, while the pursuers were waiting on the Dorsetshire and Hampshire coast for fresh supplies of powder and shot. And now the battle of this day had so entirely exhausted our stores of that kind, that many of the ships had not a single cartridge left ; while from the immediate conflict with the elements which had seemed unavoidable, the enemy were saved for a moment by a sudden change of the wind, which veered to the south-west, and enabled them to gain the open sea.

Still, though unable to inflict any further damage on them, Howard continued to pursue, notwithstanding that some of his fleet were suffering from a more pressing want than that of ammunition ; their provisions were exhausted. The Admiral was forced to send back Seymour's whole



squadron, and many of his other vessels, lest their crews should actually be starved, many of them had not food left for one single day ; he himself, on board his own flagship, had not supplies for three days, but still he kept on the chase, determined to drive the enemy to such a distance that it should be out of their power to do any harm. To use his own words " he put on a brag countenance, and gave chase as though he had wanted nothing." Drake was for doing even more ; he would have renewed the attack with those few ships that had still any ammunition left. Perhaps he would now have ventured even to board : for, if he had left Plymouth with a contempt for the enemy, the events of the last ten days had increased and confirmed it ; and, as he pressed his views on his commander-in-chief, he promised, if he might only be allowed to execute his plan, soon to make the Duke of Sidonia " wish himself back among his own orange-trees." So the Spaniards fled, and so we pursued ; till, on the 2nd of August, Howard, having now reached the Scottish coast, resolved to return to the South, leaving one or two small vessels to watch the enemy till they got beyond the Northern isles. And it was fortunate indeed that he came to this decision. Two days afterwards the weather changed, and a storm of unusual violence, for the time of year, came on. It was with great difficulty that he made his way back to the Thames, that he weathered the dangers of the Norfolk sands ; but he did weather them, and reached the roads of Margate in safety. Not so, however, fared the Armada. By the time the gale began, they were clear of the Scottish mainland, and beating, ignorant of the navigation and destitute of pilots, among the Orkney and Shetland islands. In those perilous waters the gale fell upon them before they had in the least repaired the damage they had sustained in the preceding week, and, helpless as they were, it soon completed their destruction. Some were driven eastward, and were



wrecked on the iron coast of Norway ; some were hurried westward, and were dashed to pieces among the Hebrides, or on the rocks that fringe the North of Ireland. Many went down in the open sea. Of the entire Armada little more than one-third ever returned to Spain ; and that third was so disabled as to be wholly unfit for any further service. By the lowest computation, eighty vessels, and twenty thousand men had been lost. Of the chief officers and great nobles who had escaped destruction, many had been taken prisoners. There was hardly a noble family in the whole Peninsula which had not lost some of its members ; and Philip vainly endeavoured to conceal the extent of the calamity from the nation itself, by prohibiting the wearing of mourning, which would otherwise have become the universal garb. He could not, indeed, blind his own subjects to their griefs ; but for some time he attempted to deceive foreign nations, publishing a boastful account, in different languages, of the success of the expedition ; affirming that Lord Howard's flagship had been taken, and that he himself had but narrowly escaped ; that Drake had been killed, and that the loss sustained by the Armada was limited to the single ship of Pedro de Valdez. Some of those in authority in England reprinted this veracious narrative, with the heading, " A Pack of Spanish Lies," justly thinking that a sufficient punishment for so ridiculous a gasconade, which defeated itself. But Drake was provoked into writing a letter to contradict it, in which he detailed how the ships, which the Spaniards had collected from all countries, were " beaten and shuffled together from the Lizard to Portland, and from Portland to Calais, from Calais driven with squibs from their anchors, they were chased out of sight of England ; how their crews, captured by our ships or wrecked on our shores, were sent from village to village, coupled in halters, till Her Majesty, of her princely and invincible disposition disdaining to put them

to death, and scorning either to retain or entertain them, they were all sent back to their countries to recount the worthy achievements of their invincible and dreadful navy. Not having, in all their sailing round about England, so much as sunk or taken one ship, bark, pinnace, or cock-boat of ours, or burnt so much as one sheepcote in this land."

We have had occasion to point out the Queen's parsimony, and how nearly that unroyal vice had left her kingdom defenceless against its mighty danger: it is equally the duty of the historian to record her even more unbecoming ingratitude to those whose valour and conduct had delivered her from this danger. She did, indeed, command a public thanksgiving to be offered up in St. Paul's, and decorated the walls of that Cathedral with the trophies which they had brought back; but not one single honour of any kind did she confer on those who had won the victory and gained the trophies. Lord Howard himself, while the fleet was off the Sussex coast, had knighted Frobisher, Hawkins, and others of his officers, for the gallantry they had displayed in the first four days of the pursuit of the Armada; but no compliment of the kind was conferred on any one by Elizabeth, who ought to have been the fountain of honour to all her subjects. Eight years later, indeed, she raised Lord Howard to the earldom of Nottingham; and the patent granted on that occasion did mention the gallantry he had shown and the services he had done in the destruction of the Armada; but thanks so delayed were no thanks at all, and Elizabeth's conduct on this occasion must ever remain a signal instance of the proverbial ingratitude of princes.

She was willing, however, to avail herself of the zeal of those whom she treated thus scurvily; and the next year she proposed to carry the war into Philip's own territory by sending a force to support Don Antonio, a

prince of the old Royal family of Portugal, in his attempt to recover the Portuguese throne. Accordingly in the spring of 1589 she sent forth a fleet and army under the command of Drake and Sir John Norris, who had acquired a high military reputation in Ireland and in the religious wars still raging in France, where he had served in Coligny's army. But the success of the expedition scarcely corresponded to the renown of the commanders. Again Elizabeth's parsimony stinted both fleet and army of the requisite supplies. Drake burnt some ships in the harbour of Corunna, and plundered the town itself; but he and Norris lost many men, who indulged too freely in the rich wines of the Peninsula which they found stored there. An attempt upon Lisbon was rendered abortive by the scruples of Don Antonio himself, who prudently doubted whether the best way to gain the affections of his intended subjects was to burn their metropolis; and, after a short time, the fleet returned to England, having earned some booty for themselves, but having gained no solid advantage to compensate for the loss of life which had been incurred, and which was very considerable, as one half of the men employed in the expedition had perished. Another expedition which Drake and Hawkins undertook, six years afterwards, against their old enemies, the Spanish settlements in America, was hardly more successful, and was fatal to both the commanders. They failed in an attack on the Canary Islands, and, though they took Nombre de Dios, and some other towns on the mainland of America, they gained but little booty and did but little real harm to the Spaniards. They had hardly left Nombre de Dios when Drake died, leaving behind him the reputation of having been indisputably the first seaman of his day, and a name which even now deserves to be accounted one of the brightest in our naval annals.

Other enterprises had been attempted during these



years : indeed the latter part of Elizabeth's reign was signalised by incessant expeditions, having for their object revenge upon Philip for his great attempt upon her dominions in 1588. In one, the *Revenge*, the ship that had borne Drake so gallantly against the Armada, was sunk in an engagement with a greatly superior force ; in another, Frobisher and Norris recovered Brest for Henry IV. of France, that important town having, not long before, been taken by Philip and his allies, the warriors of the League.

The action, which cost us the *Revenge*, was looked upon at the time as a fit subject for national exultation, and as such was extolled by Raleigh, no incompetent judge of a gallant exploit. She was bearing the flag of Vice-Admiral Sir R. Grenville, as one of a small squadron, which, under the command of Lord Thomas Howard, was lying off the Azores, when they learnt that a vast Spanish fleet of upwards of fifty ships was approaching. Her comrades escaped ; but some of the *Revenge's* men being ashore delayed her till the enemy came up. The commander and the crew, worthy of each other, disdained to surrender, and endeavoured to run the gauntlet through the vast host which surrounded them. For a moment it seemed possible that they might succeed ; but presently they came in contact with the *San Felipe*, a three-decker carrying eighty guns. They attacked her so vigorously that at last they sunk her ; but meantime other Spanish ships came up, and it was soon plain that the little English vessel must be overwhelmed. She was short-handed, for nearly half her crew were sick, and she had but a hundred men fit for service ; but they fought as if resolved to make up for their inferiority of numbers by their unsurpassed intrepidity. On one occasion the *Revenge* was boarded by four Spanish ships at once, but her dauntless sailors beat them all off, and even sunk a second of her assailants. The Admiral was severely wounded, but still



his men fought on ; they saw a third enemy go down, and drove a fourth on shore, and at last, being no longer able to protract their resistance, they were proposing to blow up the *Revenge*, preferring death to becoming captives, when the Spanish Admiral, by promising them their liberty, prevailed on them to surrender. If it was a triumph with fifty-three ships to have been able to take one, he was still unable to exhibit her as a trophy. He had scarcely put a prize crew on board of her when she went down, with the Spanish sailors in her. Her admiral, too, died a few days afterwards of his wounds, thanking Heaven that he had died as “a valiant soldier in his duty was bound to die ; fighting for his Queen, his religion, and his honour.”

In June, 1596, the most formidable force of all was sent against Cadiz. In the preceding year a Spanish squadron had made a descent on the Cornish coast, and had burnt some villages ; and it was commonly reported that Philip was making preparations on a large scale for a fresh attempt upon England. Elizabeth, wisely determining to anticipate him, now equipped a magnificent fleet, consisting of seventeen ships of her own, and above a hundred and twenty which she had borrowed or hired from merchants, or from rich London Companies, and sent it to attack him in his own dominions. Besides their regular crews the ships had on board seven thousand soldiers. Lord Howard himself commanded the fleet ; the Earl of Essex the army. They found the port of Cadiz crowded with ships, many of them men of war, and the remainder merchantmen richly loaded with treasure. The commanders, as has too often been the case in these joint operations, did not agree very well together. Essex was at all times presumptuous and headstrong, and vehemently opposed the plans of his more experienced colleague. His want of skill more than once let slip the advantages that his courage appeared to have

secured him, and the army obtained no success worth mentioning. The fleet, being better conducted, captured or burnt all the vessels in the harbour; destroyed great quantities of military stores of all kinds; and then, finding their own provisions and ammunition exhausted, they returned home with an immense booty.

The other naval expeditions of this reign are not worthy of any particular mention. The next year Elizabeth trusted another squadron to the command of Essex, who was still high in her favour; but he failed in most of his objects, and quarrelled with the most distinguished of his officers, Sir Walter Raleigh, who took Fayal while he was absent in another direction. In 1598, the Earl of Cumberland, with a considerable fleet of eleven ships, plundered the Canaries, and took Puerto Rico, which, however, he soon abandoned. The most memorable exploit performed in these later years of the Queen's reign was an attack made in 1602, by Sir Richard Levison and Sir William Monson, on a galleon and a squadron of galleys, which lay in the roads of Cerimbra, a town on the Portuguese coast, not far from the mouth of the Tagus. They were moored close to the land, under the guns of a strong fort. The galleys themselves were well provided with artillery; and they were under the command of Spinola, who, in subsequent years, rivalled the glory of Parma himself, as the invincible but relentless conqueror of the Palatinate. But Levison went resolutely in, silenced the fort, burnt five of the galleys, and carried off the galleon, on which he found the enormous sum of one million pieces of eight, equal to about a quarter of a million of English money; the galleys that escaped, a few weeks afterwards, made their way into the British Channel, where they were met by a small squadron, under the command of Sir Richard Mansel. A sharp engagement ensued, in which three of the Spaniards were

sunk ; but the remainder got safe into Dunkirk. The next year Elizabeth died.

The transactions which we have related were not the only naval enterprises of importance which were undertaken in her reign. Raleigh, as the founder of our first colony on the continent of North America ; Davis and Cavendish, as explorers of great hardihood and skill, and also of considerable success ; all contributed at this time to uphold the reputation of their countrymen as adventurers and skilful seamen, equal to any difficulty and to any danger ; but the enterprises in which they won their fame were private ventures, neither sanctioned by the Queen's commission, nor undertaken in her service. That they greatly enhanced the renown, and therefore the prosperity, of their country is unquestionable ; and, having done so, they are richly entitled to honourable mention in a History of England. But the present work is of a more limited character : it aspires to be a history of the Royal Navy only, in which the chief part of these gallant explorers of unknown countries never held a commission at all ; nor did even Raleigh ever hold one but as a subordinate officer. At the same time, however, that for those reasons we forbear here to detail the exploits of these and other gallant seamen of this and the next generation, it must be remembered that the distinction between those captains who bore, and those who did not bear the Royal Commission, was not so marked in that age as it subsequently became. The Royal Navy was so small, and so rarely employed, that men of an active spirit were often forced, for want of any more authorised channel of adventure, to embark in enterprises of private speculation ; such enterprises having this further recommendation, that, as we have seen in the case of Drake, eminent success in them might prove an introduction to the Royal service.



## CHAPTER IV.

1600—1655.

Improvements in naval architecture under James I. — Pett, surveyor of the navy, builds the *Prince Royal* — Failure of the attack on Algiers — Charles I. sends Lord Wimbledon against Cadiz — The fleet refuses to serve against the French Protestants — The Sovereign of the Seas — The fleet adheres to the Parliament — Batten — Rainsborough — Prince Rupert — Blake chases him from these seas — Blake reduces Jersey, &c. — The Dutch war — Battle between Blake and Van Tromp — Battle between De Ruyter and Ayscough — Blake seizes the French fleet — Bodley's action off Leghorn — Blake's defeat by Van Tromp — Blake defeats Van Tromp off La Hogue — The battle of June 2 — The battle of July 31 — End of the War.

ONE of James's earliest measures was the conclusion of a peace with Spain, and the navy was consequently relieved for a time from active service; though it was not on that account entirely neglected. The King's disposition disinclined him to war; but he was fond of scientific investigations of all kinds, for which, indeed, he had considerable capacity; and he especially encouraged experiments in naval architecture. One great improvement, that of dividing the masts, which had originally been made in one piece, into two parts, so as to enable the topmast to be struck in rough weather, had been introduced in the preceding reign. And architects now began to endeavour to improve the form of the hull by lightening it, diminishing the weight of the decks, and tapering the bottom towards the keel, so as to make the ship more speedy, and, as a necessary consequence, more manageable; for it had been proved in the series of battles with the Armada, that our ships, though less awkward than the unwieldy galleons of the Spaniards, were still greatly in need of such alterations as should enable them to go through the various evolutions requisite for their effi-



ency as ships of war, and often even for their safety, with greater ease and rapidity. The assistance of oars was now finally discarded; (some of the Spanish vessels in the Armada had had no less than three hundred rowers), and as, in connection with this change, the practice of charging the antagonist was also of necessity disused, the long beak at the head of the ship was generally abandoned, though some vessels were still built with it, apparently as an ornament, and to gratify the inclination of the eye to adhere to a form to which it is accustomed. It is a proof of the originality of James's mind in scientific matters, and of his capacity for appreciating merit in design and invention, that the person he employed as his principal naval architect was not any one who had been early trained as a shipwright, but a private member of the University of Cambridge, where he had acquired some reputation as a scholar and mathematician. His name was Phineas Pett. He had submitted his plans to the King, and was entrusted by him with the task of building the largest ship that had ever yet been launched from an English dockyard. She was of fourteen hundred tons' burden, and carried sixty-four guns on two decks. She was built at Woolwich in 1610. James, who had shown a great interest in her from the time her keel was laid, and had paid her frequent visits, to inspect the different stages of her construction, in his pride presented her to his son Prince Henry, who named her the Prince Royal, after himself. Pett subsequently built other vessels, of somewhat smaller size, on the same plan; and James, worthless and ignoble as he was in most other respects, certainly displayed a kingly liberality and sagacity in the free scope which he gave to experiments in the important service of shipbuilding. His eager patronage of commerce was in effect equally beneficial to the navy; since the mercantile marine always has been and always must be the chief nursery of seamen: and

that grew so rapidly during his peaceful reign, that the number of merchant-vessels was augmented at least twenty-fold ; while, as the distance of their voyages was much increased, they were also built of much larger dimensions than before. The establishment of the East India Company likewise contributed greatly to the same result : as they at once began to build and equip ships for trade, which proved their capability for warlike as well as for commercial purposes ; since, on their very first voyage, they defeated an attack made on them by a strong force of Spaniards and Portuguese, who looked upon them as interlopers in a trade which they desired to monopolise, but who, in spite of their combination, and of their superior numbers, were thus forced to submit to share it with those who showed a power and resolution to make every part of the ocean free to the enterprise of their nation.

In spite, however, of Mr. Pett's industry, and of James's encouragement of his labours, the Royal Navy was not yet sufficiently large to rely wholly on its own resources ; and in the only warlike operation undertaken in this reign, the attack on Algiers in the year 1618, the greater portion of the vessels employed, as in previous reigns, were hired from private merchants. The expedition itself was productive of neither benefit nor glory. It was sent out, as was generally believed, to pacify Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador ; both King and people in Spain having been greatly exasperated by the expedition of Sir Walter Raleigh to South America, which, whatever had been the professions by which he persuaded James to release him from the Tower, and to allow him to sail for that country, proved a mere piratical attempt on the Spanish settlements, which he attacked and plundered in the most lawless and shameless manner. On his return James had caused him to be executed, not on a conviction for his conduct in this expedition, which it

probably could not have been difficult to obtain, but in pursuance of a sentence passed upon him twelve years before, of which his release from the Tower, coupled with his subsequent appointment to a command, clearly, both in law and common sense, was a remission. The Spaniards, however, were still discontented; and, as Gondomar was incessant in his complaints of the injury inflicted on trade by the Algerine pirates, James, under the influence of his favourite, Buckingham, and without reflecting that it was far more the concern, and equally in the power of the King of Spain to chastise them, consented to send a fleet to the Mediterranean with that object. It consisted of eighteen ships, six belonging to the King, and twelve hired from the merchants; and so greatly had the size of British ships increased of late years, that the smallest of the Royal vessels was of four hundred tons' burden, and carried thirty-six guns; while the smallest of the merchantmen was of one hundred tons, and twelve guns. The command of it was given to Sir Robert Mansel, now Vice-Admiral of the kingdom. Of the details we know little beyond the fact that one attempt upon the town of Algiers was made in the autumn, and another, in which fireships were employed against the shipping, in the spring of the next year, 1621, and that both entirely failed.

The exploration of the North-western seas with the view of discovering a passage to China and India, which had been originated by Frobisher, was continued in this reign by our merchants, with greater steadiness, with greater advantages to general science, and in one instance, at least, with considerable and lasting benefits to our commerce; though none of the adventurers succeeded in their professed object, the attainment of which, as will be seen hereafter, was reserved for the present generation. The most eminent of the navigators employed in these enterprises, were Hudson and Baffin. Hudson, in several



successive voyages, visited Greenland and Labrador, discovering to the west of that district the enormous bay which still bears his name, and thus laying the foundation for the valuable trade which still subsists between the adjacent regions and this country. On his return from one voyage he likewise explored the coast below the St. Lawrence, and discovered the important River Hudson, which also, though all other ties between it and Britain have long been severed, still preserves the memory of its British discoverer. His spirit of enterprise proved fatal to him. He usually quitted England in the spring, and returned to it in the autumn; but in November, 1610, having forced his way to a point far beyond that attained by any previous navigator, he was beset by the ice, and forced to winter in those dreary regions. There he lay for nearly eight months. No provision whatever had been made for so protracted an absence from home, and the hardships and distresses, little short of starvation, to which they were exposed, so exasperated the fiercest of his crew, that they resolved to turn adrift him and those who were sick, and, as there would thus be more food for those who remained, to endeavour with the rest to reach England. Of Hudson and his party nothing more is known; they must soon have perished. Of the mutineers, too, the chief ringleaders all died, some of sickness and want, others in fights with the savages on the coast; those who reached their own country in safety were very few, and it may have been the smallness of their number, and their comparative insignificance which saved them from being called to account for the desertion and murder of their captain. One of their number, Robert Bylet, even rose to some eminence in the same line, being, a year or two afterwards, appointed captain of two expeditions sent out to renew the search for the N.W. passage, which are more usually associated with the name of Baffin, who was nominally his pilot, though



the instructions under which they sailed, associated him to a great degree in the command. In the second expedition they sailed up Davis's Strait, (the upper part of which now received the name of Baffin's Bay) to the 78th degree of latitude, a point far beyond any that had been attained by former navigators. And Baffin, who, like Hudson, was skilled in mathematical and astronomical science, continued his predecessor's observations on the magnetic needle and compass with great accuracy, and laid down what never had been attempted before, a method for determining the longitude at sea by observations of the heavenly bodies. But though he also discovered Lancaster Sound, the channel which is now known to afford by far the least impracticable passage to the westward, and though he was off the entrance to it in the middle of July, the ice, which seems to have been unusually abundant and impenetrable that year, effectually barred any attempt to explore it. Bylet and Baffin returned home in the autumn, and the completeness of their failure caused the notion of even the existence of a north-west passage to be almost laid aside. In the early part of the next century the idea was revived by the offer on the part of the Admiralty of a reward of £20,000 to any one who should discover it, but even that munificent promise excited but little attention at the time; nor was it till our own age that the endeavours to find such a passage were resumed with any continued steadiness of purpose, when the absence of other fields for exertion unfortunately awakened a desire for distinction in a path in which success for any useful purpose was soon seen to be unattainable; and in which such success as was met with was dearly purchased by the total destruction of the gallant crews who achieved it.

Charles I., who succeeded to the throne in March, 1625, was more active with his fleets than his father had been; and, at first, not more successful. His marriage

with the daughter of France had broken off all the treaties subsisting between England and Spain, and he determined to convert the feeling of tacit suspicion thus created into positive hostility. In the autumn of the same year a magnificent fleet of fifty vessels, supported by a considerable Dutch squadron, and having an army of ten thousand men on board, sailed, under the command of Lord Wimbledon, towards Cadiz, in the hope of intercepting the treasure-ships that arrived once a year at that port from South America. When the fleets arrived off the Spanish coast, the Admiral found the galleons were not yet expected for some weeks ; so, to avoid wasting his time, he determined to make an attempt upon Cadiz itself. With one strong division he attacked the vessels that lay in the harbour, but they all effected their retreat, and escaped in safety. Another squadron landed the army which was to assault the city on the side of the land ; but, after taking one of its outposts, the soldiers got drunk, and their officers thought themselves fortunate to regain their ships without loss. Presently sickness broke out among both the troops and the sailors ; and the whole expedition returned home, having made themselves and their country ridiculous by a vain display of force without power. The failure of the enterprise was chiefly attributed to the incapacity of the Admiral himself, who had no naval experience, nor any recommendation whatever for so high an employment, except the favour of the Duke of Buckingham, who had succeeded Lord Nottingham as High-Admiral.

The next expedition, if, indeed, it can be called one at all, considering that, though the King's ships were employed, the English crews took no part in it, was still more immediately attributable to Buckingham in all the circumstances of its failure ; and is only of sufficient importance to be mentioned here, from the fact of its having given rise to the first mutiny that ever took place on board an English fleet ; and to the use of Roundrobins,

which have since been so often used both for good and bad objects, but which appear at all times to have been confined to seamen. Louis XIII. had obtained from James before his death a promise of the loan of some ships, under the pretext of employing them against the Genoese; but, when Charles came to the throne and married his sister, he availed himself of the influence which that connection gave him over the new King's mind, to propose rather to employ them against his own Huguenot subjects, who were at this time holding out Rochelle with great courage against all the forces which he could bring against it. Buckingham persuaded Charles to consent to this change in the destination of his fleet. But the cause of the French Protestants was looked on by the English people in general as their own, and the seamen fully shared the national feeling: they met, signed a huge roundrobin, declaratory of their resolution not to act against Rochelle, and presented it to their commander, Admiral Pennington; after which, without waiting for any reply or any order from Pennington, who, except on account of the violation of all discipline which they had committed, was probably not much displeased at their resolution, they weighed anchor and bore away for England. But, before they could reach any English harbour, the Admiral, who had sent Buckingham intelligence of what had happened, received a peremptory order to return to Dieppe, and there to place his vessels at the service of the French monarch; on which the whole of the sailors, without exception, or, as others relate, with the exception of one gunner, quitted their ships, and returned home, leaving Louis nothing but the vessels themselves, which, without the men who were to sail and fight them, were but of little help to him.

In this siege of Rochelle, the French King did not gain much honour, and we reaped nothing but disgrace. It was not long after this expedition of Pennington's before



Buckingham, who was always the slave of caprice and vanity, quarrelled with the French King, or, as many reported, with the French Queen, and persuaded Charles to assist the citizens, whom, a little while before, he had been so eager to crush. He made one attempt to relieve them himself, in which he succeeded in nothing but in proving his own utter incompetency to direct a military operation ; and he was preparing for a second expedition, when he was assassinated by a man named Felton. Still Charles, whom the loss of his favourite minister only made the more resolute to carry out his plans, persisted in the design of sending out the fleet which Buckingham had equipped, and gave the command of it to Lord Lindsey. But the besiegers had blocked the entrance to the harbour of Rochelle, with a barrier which the English ships were unable to break ; and Lord Lindsey was compelled to witness the surrender of the city to Louis, without being able to strike a single blow in the cause, after so much preparation and parade.

Charles was at all times anxious for the maintenance and improvement of his marine. He still retained Pett in his employ, giving him a regular appointment as overseer of the navy ; and, among other ships, Pett built him one, the *Sovereign of the Seas*, which, in the judgment of his contemporaries, exceeded all the endeavours of previous shipwrights. She was the first three-decker in our navy, carrying a hundred and twelve guns, and being of sixteen hundred and thirty-seven tons' burden, one ton for every year that had elapsed from the birth of our Saviour till that in which she was launched. At the end of sixty years, after having come in safety and honour out of all the great battles between the English and Dutch fleets, in the time of Cromwell and Charles II., she was burnt by accident at Chatham ; to the great regret of the sailors, who looked upon her as the finest vessel in the world. It may almost be said that Charles's fondness for



his navy was one of the main causes of his destruction, since it led him to the imposition of ship-money, which provoked a more organized resistance than any other of his measures. More than once he equipped a fleet, being on the verge of war with France or with Holland ; but those clouds passed away, and no active operations against foreign enemies occurred to vary the sad history of this reign. When the rebellion broke out, the King's affairs were so mismanaged that the Parliament found little difficulty in getting the fleet into their hands, and they gave the command of it to the Earl of Warwick ; but in the year 1645, the self-denying ordinance compelled him to resign it, and he was succeeded for a short time by a Presbyterian officer named Batten, who disgraced even a Parliamentary commission, by entering the port of Bridlington, in order to direct his cannon upon a house in which the Queen, Henrietta Maria, had taken up her temporary abode. He was soon removed from his post, though not for that dastardly conduct ; but the chief portion of the sailors belonged to the Presbyterian party, and, when the Independents began to overpower all the other factions, and to maintain the manifest predominance in the state, those on board the fleet made no secret of their discontent. To check it, the Parliament superseded Batten, and sent down Colonel Rainsborough to take the command in his stead. Rainsborough, though a brave officer, had no knowledge whatever of the sea ; and, after a short time, at the instigation of Batten, who had kept up a connection with some of the most influential of the seamen, the chief body of them mutinied, seized Rainsborough by force, and put him on shore ; and then, crossing over to Holland, placed themselves at the disposal of the Prince of Wales, who was making vigorous efforts to collect a force to go to the assistance and rescue of his father. At first the Prince himself, with his brother, the Duke of York, took the command of the fleet that had

thus come over to them. They entered the mouth of the Thames, and took some merchant-vessels of considerable value ; but presently Lord Warwick, who had been restored to the command of the Parliamentary force, came against them with a squadron greatly superior to theirs, and compelled them to retire again to Holland ; after which, Charles placed his fleet wholly under the command of his cousin, Prince Rupert, who had either regained the King's confidence after the surrender of Bristol, or had never lost (as he certainly never deserved to lose) that of the Prince. Rupert, like Rainsborough, had hitherto served only on land ; but he soon displayed eminent capacity for naval warfare. The force at his command was, however, so greatly inferior to that in the service of the Parliament, that he was compelled at first to content himself with a desultory, it might almost be said a piratical kind of warfare against the King's enemies, in which he took many prizes, without being able to contribute to the ultimate success of his uncle's cause, or, after his murder, to that of his cousin Charles II.

In the summer of 1649, he crossed over to Ireland ; but thither he was followed by a squadron far stronger than his own, under the command of an officer destined to enjoy the greatest renown of any man of his time as a seaman, a renown, indeed, which still shines with almost undiminished lustre ; and yet who was, up to this time, wholly inexperienced in naval affairs, having, it is believed, never set foot on board a ship till he did so as Commander-in-Chief. One might fancy that both sides had agreed to discard the rule established by Henry VIII., and adhered to with such conspicuous fortune by Elizabeth at the time of the Armada, when one sees the naval forces both of the King and Parliament placed under the command of soldiers. The King, as has been said, had made Rupert his admiral, and as a kind of answer to such an appointment, the Parliament, which immediately

after the King's death superseded Lord Warwick,<sup>\*</sup> now chose for their commander Colonel Robert Blake, who as yet had shown no qualifications for such a post, beyond dauntless courage and invincible resolution, but who was destined to justify his appointment by a series of victories, won by courage and skill combined, which built him up a fame that, even after the unparalleled naval triumphs of the French revolutionary war, his countrymen still place on a level with all but the glory of Nelson. Blake had other gallant soldiers under him, Deane and Popham,<sup>\*</sup> who, like him, soon proved themselves apt scholars in naval tactics; and, being at the head of a force in numbers greatly superior to that of Rupert, he pursued him to the coast of Ireland, and blockaded him in the harbour of Kinsale, where he thought that he had him and his squadron in a net. But the Prince, by an admirable effort of audacity and seamanship, broke through the blockading force, and took refuge in the ports of Spain and Portugal. Still Blake pursued him; the Spaniards were in too great fear of Cromwell to protect him; so he crossed the Atlantic to the West Indies, and from thence recrossed the ocean to France, where he lay in inactivity, but in safety, waiting for more prosperous days; which, after a long period of disappointment and distress, did at last return to reward his courage and his patience.

Blake now began a course of brilliant triumphs. Guernsey, Jersey, and the Scilly Isles still maintained their adherence to the Royal cause; and they were held by stout and loyal governors. Sir John Grenville commanded at St. Mary's, the largest of the Scilly Isles; Sir George Carteret at Jersey and Guernsey. Both commanders were confident; for the islands boasted of

<sup>\*</sup> In their original commission Popham was named first, as the Commander-in-Chief. But it may be supposed that Blake's superiority in ability soon caused the orders to be changed, since in the very first *active* operations Popham was undoubtedly under Blake's orders.



strongly built and well fortified castles, such as had never yet been attacked by ships with success. Blake, however, ran close under the castle of St. Mary's; breached the walls, and soon compelled Grenville to surrender. Carteret's resources were greater, and his resistance was consequently longer; but an old French proverb affirms that a place besieged is sure to fall, and its truth was verified in this instance. Blake's energy was ceaseless; and, cut off from all reinforcements, and all hope of succour or means of escape, Carteret was soon reduced to follow Grenville's example, and Blake was left leisure to win more honourable laurels from foreign enemies. Shrewd statesmen had long seen that a war with Holland was inevitable. The Stadtholder, the Prince of Orange, had married a daughter of Charles I., and did not disguise his indignation at his murder. He had given Rupert all the countenance in his power; and, when, in the winter of 1650, he died after a short illness, his subjects, partly, perhaps, out of respect to his memory, adopted all his feelings towards the two parties in England. They insulted the ambassadors whom Cromwell sent to propose an alliance to the States-General. Cromwell retaliated by passing the Act of Navigation, which, though in appearance it equally affected all nations, was in fact chiefly aimed at, and chiefly injurious to the Dutch, whose wealth was derived from maritime traffic in a much greater degree than that of any other people. While the two countries were thus mutually jealous of and offended with each other, an accidental encounter took place between their fleets, which struck a spark that at once kindled into war. In May, 1652, an officer of the name of Young, captain of an English frigate, fired on a Dutch man-of-war for refusing to salute the British flag by striking his own, a compliment which the English ships had claimed in the British Channel ever since the Conquest, and which would probably not have been refused



in the time of Charles I. At last the Dutchman was compelled to submit ; but, four days afterwards, the great Dutch Admiral Van Tromp (whose victory over the Spanish fleet twelve years before had given him the greatest reputation of any seaman of the age) sailed down through the straits of Dover, where Blake was lying with his squadron, and bore his flag proudly aloft, refusing to acknowledge the British dominion of the sea even in sight of the British shores. Van Tromp had forty-two ships with him. Blake had but fifteen : nevertheless, he did not hesitate for a moment, but, on receiving a refusal of the customary salute, at once attacked the Dutchman. After a while, he was joined by eight more ships, under Admiral Bourne ; but still his force scarcely half equalled that of the enemy in number, though in size some of our ships exceeded the largest of theirs. And it must also be acknowledged that the Dutch vessels, having been built for the shallow waters of their own country, were much flatter in the floor than the English, and were consequently far less manageable in the open sea or with a fresh wind. There was no attempt at manœuvring. Blake had not yet acquired sufficient nautical skill for complicated evolutions : and Van Tromp, being at the head of a force greatly superior, thought straightforward fighting the best suited to his strength. He was soon undeceived. The battle raged for many hours, and was only terminated by the darkness. When night came on, Van Tromp retired to his own harbours, leaving two of his vessels as prizes in the hands of the English ; and Blake, being by his retreat left master of the Channel, cruised up and down it, making prizes of great numbers of valuable merchantmen coming from all quarters to the ports of Holland.

But those who then directed the councils of the United Provinces, as they were called, were not the men to sit down tamely under a defeat, or to see their whole com-

merce ruined by a single battle, without making vigorous attempts to retrieve their honour ; and before the end of July they had collected a larger fleet than that which had been engaged in May ; with which Van Tromp returned towards the Downs, hoping there to catch Blake at a greater disadvantage. Blake was at this time absent with his fleet on the north-eastern coast of the island, whither he had gone to repress the encroachments which the Dutch were making on our fisheries in that quarter. But, though the most eminent, he was not the only skilful admiral in the British service. Sir George Ayscough, who had lately gained a brilliant reputation by the reduction of Barbadoes, had a small squadron off the mouth of the Thames when Van Tromp appeared ; and, unequal as his force was to that brought against him, he yet made so skilful a disposition of it, and showed the enemy so bold a front, being also in some degree favoured by the wind, that they were unable to attack him with advantage. After a time Van Tromp retired to his own shores, and the Dutch Government was so highly displeased with him for losing what they looked upon as a fine opportunity of sailing up the Thames, and perhaps even of gaining possession of London itself, that they removed him from his command, and replaced him by another officer of great and deserved celebrity, De Ruyter. He at once, with about forty ships of war and a powerful squadron of armed merchantmen, went in search of Ayscough, whom, on the 10th of August, 1652, he found off Plymouth. But by this time the English Admiral had been reinforced, so that his fleet amounted to thirty-eight sail ; and, as his were for the most part larger ships than the Dutch, he was in effect not very unequal to his antagonist. De Ruyter at once prepared to attack, thinking, as he was to windward, that so far he had a decided advantage ; but Ayscough, before firing a gun, broke through his fleet with his own leading squadron, and thus wrested the weather-gage from him. The

battle was fierce and long : again night parted the combatants without any decisive advantage having been gained by either side ; though the Dutch vessels were severely crippled, and glad to be able, under cover of the darkness, to effect their escape to their own waters.

Both countries now prepared to carry on the contest on a larger scale. Cromwell, not to be behind the Dutch in ingratitude, superseded Ayscough ; but he reinforced Blake's fleet with strong squadrons under the command of Penn as Vice-Admiral, and Bourne as Rear-Admiral ; while the Dutch gave De Ruyter De Witt for a colleague, and raised his fleet to about seventy sail, a force very nearly equal to that of the British. The moment that Blake was joined by his colleagues, he went in pursuit of the hostile fleet ; and, on the 28th of September, he found them cruising off our own North Foreland. De Ruyter would have retreated ; he pointed out to De Witt that their ships were not superior in number, and in size were inferior to the English, and also that they could hardly rely on all their crews, who were very generally discontented at the treatment Van Tromp had met with from their Government. But De Witt disdained a movement which would have had the appearance of flight before an equal foe, and held on his course till the two fleets met almost in midchannel. For a while the battle raged with a fierceness which had not as yet been equalled in the encounters between the two nations ; but it was late in the afternoon before it began, and by the time that ten of the Dutch ships had been sunk and ten captured, the darkness of night made all further contest impossible. A second time the Dutch availed themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them to retreat ; and Blake, having chased them to within sight of their own shores, did not venture to trust his own ships among their treacherous and unknown shoals and sandbanks, but returned to his own harbours.

The Dutch vessels thus taken were not the only prizes



that he brought this autumn into our ports. He had also made one large capture, which affords a singular proof how little the modern conditions of peace or war were understood in those times, or how entirely they were esteemed secondary to considerations of immediate or general advantage. While looking for the Dutch, Blake learned that the French Admiral, the Duc de Vendôme, was lying in Calais harbour with a fleet that was intended to proceed to the relief of Dunkirk, which was at that time closely besieged by the Spaniards. We were at peace with France, and we had no reason to desire to assist Spain : nevertheless, Blake determined that it was not for our interest that Dunkirk should be relieved, and accordingly, he forced his way into Calais, his superiority of numbers making all resistance impossible, took possession of the French fleet, and carried it off, crews and all, to England ; and though Mazarin remonstrated, as well he might, he stood too much in awe of the imperious genius of Cromwell to go to war to avenge so unparalleled an insult.

One other action which took place this autumn deserves mention, not only for the gallantry displayed by our sailors against a greatly superior force, but also as having been the first instance of an engagement fought by a British squadron in the waters of the Mediterranean. Commodore Richard Bodley, with three men-of-war and a fire-ship, a kind of vessel which in those days was looked on as almost an indispensable adjunct to a fleet, was convoying home a small but valuable squadron of merchantmen from Smyrna, when he was attacked off Leghorn by the Dutch Admiral, Van Galen, and eleven ships of war. Bodley bade the merchantmen provide for their own safety by flight, but with his own ships gallantly faced the enemy, though they were nearly three to one. They fought the whole of one afternoon and a great part of the next morning ; and the conflict ended in the Dutch being com-



pletely beaten off with a heavy loss of men, the greater part of their ships being severely crippled. They had made prize, however, of one English frigate, the *Phoenix*, which, presuming too much on the disabled state of one of the largest of their vessels, had grappled and boarded it, and found the tables turned on herself, losing most of her men, and remaining in the power of the antagonist which she had marked for her own prize. With his three remaining ships Bodley rejoined his convoy, which he conducted safe to England, having gained great honour by thus preserving them from an enemy who, in appearance, was irresistible.

After the battle off the North Foreland, Blake cruised up and down for a while to show his complete dominion over the Channel, and then broke up his fleet into several squadrons: despatching one to the north; another to the west, to protect our colliers, fishermen, and traders in those quarters; and retaining under his own command only thirty-seven men-of-war with their complement of a few fireships. His confidence had nearly proved fatal to him; for, during October, the Dutch Government had been making unparalleled efforts to retrieve their late disaster. They had replaced Van Tromp in the supreme command, and had exerted such diligence in their dockyards and naval departments that, by the beginning of November, they had a magnificent fleet of above one hundred sail ready for sea. The division of the British force was known to Van Tromp, and as soon as these preparations were finished, he hastened to take advantage of a circumstance so favourable to him. In the last week of November he issued forth at the head of his entire fleet, and speedily came up with Blake, who had no idea of his being at sea till he saw him. Yet, unequal as the fleet he had with him was to the Dutchman's overwhelming numbers, he resolved rather to fight as he was, than, by retreating, to leave all the southern coast, and perhaps

London itself at his mercy. The Parliament, or rather Cromwell, had lately sent him a new second in command, Monk, who was also hitherto only known as a general, and who afterwards went to and fro between the two services ; serving his country sometimes on land, sometimes at sea, and on each element rendering it very important service. Monk's talents were very inferior to those of Blake, but his courage was great, and he fully agreed with him in the propriety of fighting ; no courage, however, could compensate for the inadequacy of the English force, for the Dutch were brave too, and were inspired to unusual exertions by the belief that it was now in their power to secure a victory that would efface the recollection of their previous discomfitures. In naval battles it commonly happens that the commanders-in-chief bear the brunt of the day, and so it proved in this instance. Blake's ship was the *Triumph*, of sixty guns ; Van Tromp's flag flew on board the *Brederode*, of ninety ; once the *Brederode* was attacked by the *Garland* on the starboard, and the *Bonadventure* on the larboard side, and was in imminent danger of being taken, till his colleague and rear-admiral, Evertzen, brought up the *Zealandia* to the other side of the *Bonadventure*. For some time the four ships lay locked together in close conflict, as the *Victory* and *Téméraire* were locked with two French ships at Trafalgar ; but the result of the former was different from that of the latter combat. The *Garland* had but forty-eight guns, the *Bonadventure* only thirty, while the smallest of the Dutchmen had seventy-two, and gallant as the English seamen were, the contest was too unequal. The *Garland* and the *Bonadventure* were both taken, and the *Brederode* passed on to attack the *Triumph*, which had already suffered severely, having, with her comrades, the *Vanguard* and the *Victory*, been engaged with nearly a score of the enemy at the same time. Still, in spite of his losses, Blake was so far from declining the combat, that

he rather courted its continuance, hoping to recover the prizes ; but the *Brederode* was far larger than the *Triumph*, her weight of metal greater, her crew more numerous : and he was long in the most imminent danger of swelling the list of Van Tromp's successes by his own capture. In such a crisis his exertions, and those of his crew, were almost superhuman. Three times did the boarders from the *Brederode* swarm upon his deck ; three times were they driven with fearful slaughter back to their own ship. But still the *Vanguard* stuck fearlessly by her chief ; and, though the flagship was all but a wreck, and though the survivors of the crew were hardly sufficient to man the guns, when the early darkness of winter (it was the 9th of December) descended upon the combatants, the British flag was still flying at her mast-head. Under cover of the night Blake withdrew his fleet, still, like a lion at bay, bringing up the rear himself in the *Triumph* ; while Van Tromp, though victorious, was forced to acknowledge that it was no bloodless victory that he had gained. One of his own ships had been blown up, and all her crew had perished ; many more were entirely disabled and could hardly reach their own ports to refit.

Forming a fresh squadron of those which were the least injured, Van Tromp for a time cruised about in undisputed mastery of the Channel. In a vainglorious spirit, unworthy of so brave a man, but emblematic of the fierce character of the age, he fastened a broom to his masthead, to denote that he would sweep the seas of the English ; and in some degree made good his vaunt by stretching down the Bay of Biscay as far as Rochelle, and capturing numbers of our traders which were hastening homeward in mistaken security. Meanwhile the Government in England were taking measures to put a stop to his boasting. Blake's defeat had not deprived him of their confidence, and, indeed, they took pains to show that it was



undiminished, by renewing his appointment as Commander-in-chief, and giving him increased powers to remedy the evils to which he attributed his recent disaster: the most important of which, in his eyes, was the custom, that had hitherto prevailed, when the merchant-vessels were taken into the public service, as was still the practice to a great extent, of letting their former captains still command them, though they had previously had no experience whatever of warlike service, nor had given any security for their attachment to the state. In Blake's opinion, some of his captains in the recent battle had been guilty of cowardice, and more had shown disaffection; and, at his suggestion, it was now made indispensable that all officers employed in the national fleet should bear a regular commission.

In the meantime, while Van Tromp was parading his mastery of the sea in the Channel and the Bay of Biscay, in the English dockyards the work of refitting the old ships, launching new ones, and manning them, went vigorously on, till, by the beginning of February, a fine fleet of eighty sail was ready. Blake's old colleagues, Monk and Deane, were again with him, however, not now as admirals, but as commanders of a strong body of soldiers, with whom the crews of some of the leading ships were reinforced; the vice-admiral was Penn; the rear-admiral, an officer who subsequently rose to very high professional distinction, John Lawson. The whole body of officers were eager for a battle, in which they doubted not to restore the pre-eminence of the country; which, if her glory had not been tarnished, had at least had her dignity and influence impaired by the defeat of December. Blake made his way to the mouth of the Channel, hoping to surprise Van Tromp on his return to the north, before any intelligence could reach him of the renewed strength of the British fleet. His plan succeeded to his wish; and on the 18th of February he met his



antagonist off Cape La Hogue, with a fleet almost equal to his own in number, and having also under his escort a vast company of merchantmen and prizes, which he was conducting to the Dutch ports. Van Tromp was surprised, but not daunted; he at once prepared for battle, and flattered himself that the position of the English fleet, when he first descried it, gave him good reason to hope for a second and more decisive victory. For the English admirals, being in the best ships, had outsailed their respective divisions, and were, almost unsupported, at some distance in advance of the main body. Without a moment's delay, Van Tromp bade the merchantmen withdraw out of the range of fire, and fell upon Blake and his comrades, in the hope of cutting them off and capturing them before they could receive assistance. Again Blake's boldness had brought him into the most imminent danger; he had scarcely a dozen ships around him when he was assailed by the whole Dutch force, and it seemed almost impossible that he and his comrades should not all be overwhelmed. On board the *Triumph*, which Van Tromp selected as his chief object, the slaughter was prodigious: Blake himself was severely wounded; Ball, his captain, fell dead at his feet. There was scarcely a man on board who was left unhurt; above a hundred were slain. And, in fact, by the time the rest of the fleet had come up, the *Triumph* was completely disabled. As the day wore on, the rest of the English fleet joined in the combat, which thus became more equal; both sides fighting as if the safety of their country depended on the prowess of each individual. Penn's ship, the *Speaker*, was towed out of the line of battle a mere wreck; the *Prosperous* was taken and retaken. Of the Dutch, one ship went down with all on board; another, that struck, was boarded by our men, who found that, of all her crew, not one single man was left alive. Altogether the day had gone in favour of the English, who had lost but one ship,

the Sampson, while they had sunk or taken six of the enemy. But the battle was not yet over. The night was spent in repairing damages on each side ; and on the 19th, at midday, the conflict was renewed : Blake directing his chief endeavours to cut off the merchantmen, and Van Tromp exerting all his skill to save them. Both succeeded in some degree. Blake took fifteen or sixteen of the convoy ; while the rest got by him in safety, and made the best of their way to their own ports. He also took five more of Van Tromp's men-of-war ; but both sides had been so weakened on the first day that the battle on the second lacked much of its former spirit. It had been a running fight ; and when it was renewed again, on the 20th, the fleets were nearly opposite Boulogne. Van Tromp's object was still the same, to preserve his convoy, whose cargoes were of immense value ; nor, having now learnt by experience that he could not vanquish his intrepid and unwearied pursuers, had he any higher aim for his ships of war. He was now fighting, not to gain victory, but to avoid further loss. And this, in a great degree, he accomplished : as soon as he reached the boundaries of his own country he anchored close in shore, whither Blake, ignorant of the soundings, did not dare to pursue him. But the victory of the English was undeniable. They had lost but one ship ; they had taken or sunk, by the confession of the Dutch themselves, nine ships of war ; and of the merchantmen they brought sixteen into Dover harbour, having also, it was believed, sunk others ; and having certainly compelled many to purchase their safety by throwing their cargoes overboard.

It was but a poor compensation to the Dutch that about the same time their Admiral, Van Galen, whose action with Bodley, in the Mediterranean, has already been mentioned, having, with a fleet of sixteen sail, fallen in with an English squadron of six frigates, took or destroyed five of them, losing his own life in the moment of victory. It

was in the British Channel that the war was to be decided, and in that the Dutch made one more vigorous effort to wrest from us the supremacy in those waters. They worked unremittingly to equip a new fleet, and for a moment they were favoured by a fresh exhibition of Cromwell's tyranny; who, in April of this year, 1653, expelled the Long Parliament at the point of the bayonet, and thus increased the discontent at his government that all moderate and honest men were daily feeling more and more strongly. Blake, though both moderate and honest, did not care to enter into political questions. His principle of action was that, whoever might be in power, his best services were due to his country. But it was very probably a doubt how far he might be disposed to acquiesce in an act of violence that had placed the whole nation at the mercy of Cromwell and his soldiery, which caused him to be sent at this juncture to the North, on an expedition that seems to have had no other object but that of getting him for a moment out of the way. It so happened that at the very same time Van Tromp had gone northwards also, in order to meet the homeward-bound Dutch merchantmen off the Scottish coast, and thus to conduct them down the North Sea to their destination, since the British Channel was no longer a safe path. He returned, however, to Holland early in May; and then, hearing that Blake was still at a distance, he inferred, somewhat too hastily, that there was no available force to oppose him, and again crossed over to the Downs with his whole fleet, making many prizes among our traders, and approaching our shore so closely as to batter Dover Castle for some hours with his guns. The news, however, of his presence and his exploits soon reached Monk, who, with Deane, Penn, and Lawson, was lying in Yarmouth Roads with a splendid fleet of a hundred and five sail, besides fireships; they at once issued forth to put a stop to his ravages; and on the 2nd of June the two fleets came in sight of each other. Van Tromp had ninety-



eight sail, besides fireships, with De Ruyter, De Witt, and Evertzen for his colleagues ; and, with a force so nearly equal to ours, and with such tried comrades, he was as eager for battle as the English. As had happened before, the fight which ensued lasted for two days ; but what especially distinguishes it from all preceding battles, and makes it a kind of landmark in the history of naval tactics, is, that on this occasion the manœuvre of breaking the enemy's line was put into execution by Lawson, in the same way that, at the end of the succeeding century, it was practised by Rodney : though, so completely had the exploit of the older admiral been forgotten, that its revival in the reign of George III. was looked upon as an original invention ; which, indeed, as far as Rodney was concerned, it undoubtedly was. Lawson's squadron was in the van of the fleet, and early in the day he began the action by cutting through the enemy's line under a press of sail ; thus separating De Ruyter's squadron from the main body, and applying his whole force to its destruction. He had very nearly succeeded, when Van Tromp in person bore down to De Ruyter's support ; but, though disappointed in the capture of the Admiral himself, Lawson had already sunk one or two of his squadron, and had stamped the battle throughout with a character of victory. Still at nightfall the conflict was undecided. Van Tromp had displayed every resource of skill and courage, his men had seconded him with undaunted resolution and firmness, and the carnage on board many of our ships had been terrible ; for the Dutch, too, on this day introduced a new invention, commonly ascribed to De Witt, the use of chain-shot, which long kept its place among the warlike engines of destruction, and which proved of signal efficacy in this conflict. At almost the first broadside, a chain shot cut Deane in two, and all day similar missiles swept our decks with fatal effect. On the morrow the battle was renewed with undiminished energy ;



and the result was still undecided, when Blake himself appeared on the scene. The intelligence that had brought Monk out from Yarmouth, had reached him when still further north, and, at once divining the line of conduct which Monk would adopt, he hastened southwards with all speed to take his share in the battle which he so correctly foresaw. He had with him eighteen fine ships ; and about two o'clock reached the contending fleets with this decisive reinforcement. As he approached, Van Tromp, gathering additional courage from despair, made one last effort to fix the victory on his side : before the fresh squadron could have time to produce its effect, he bore down on Penn's flagship, the *James*, of sixty-six guns, and boarded her ; but the men of the *James* beat back his boarders, and retaliated by boarding the *Brederode*. Their courage, while it saved their ship, was fatal to themselves, for the powder-magazine of the *Brederode* blew up (some say that Van Tromp himself had fired it), and every one of the boarders, with a large portion of the *Brederode*'s own crew, perished. The long duration of the conflict must have nearly exhausted the magazine beforehand, for, though sadly crippled by the explosion, the *Brederode* was not destroyed ; and Van Tromp himself was unhurt. Fearing, however, lest he should be supposed by his followers to be dead, he shifted his flag to a frigate ; in which he passed through his fleet, using all his efforts to encourage his men to a continuance of the conflict. But his exertions were vain : indeed the additional strength which Blake had brought with him would have been sufficient to change the fortune of the day, had it been going in favour of the Dutch before ; while, as it was, the little advantage that had been gained, had been gained by the English. All that was left for the brave Dutchman was to retreat in as good order and with as little loss as he might ; and this he did, but he left eleven of his best ships as prizes, and nine more had been sunk or burnt

during the action. No English ship had struck, or had been destroyed; and the official report of the victory acknowledged a loss of little more than three hundred and fifty killed and wounded. Many of our vessels, however, had been so crippled that Blake was obliged to send them into port to be repaired: with the rest he cruised about off the Dutch coasts, making many prizes; and doing their trade as much damage by the terror which he caused, as by the losses which he actually inflicted.

The Dutch Government deliberated anxiously on their prospect of success in a continuance of the war. Their admirals advised them to make peace, confessing that the English fleets and seamen were so superior that victory over them was impossible. Yielding to such representations, their ministers sent an envoy to England to propose peace; but at the same time they exerted themselves with energy so undiminished to prepare for a renewal of war, that, by the end of July, when it was ascertained that no favourable terms were to be looked for from Cromwell, they were able again to put Van Tromp at the head of a magnificent fleet of ninety ships in good condition, and well supplied with everything requisite for a long campaign. They thought it greatly in their favour that Blake, whose wound, received in the battle of February, had never yet had proper attention, had been compelled by illness to resign his command, and that there was no chance of his again coming to the succour of the other admirals, the best of whom they looked upon as far inferior to Van Tromp. Monk, Penn and Lawson, however, were formidable antagonists; and, though their numbers were hardly equal to those of the Dutch, the repeated victories which the English had lately gained had given their seamen a confidence which made them disregard any inferiority of that kind. On the 31st of July the rival fleets met for their last battle in this war. None had been conducted with greater

fury on both sides. It had been said that in former battles Blake and Van Tromp had fought as if inspired by personal animosity ; but, in this, Monk actually enjoined his men to give no quarter, and to destroy vessels rather than to take them. It was disgraceful to issue such an order ; it would be disgraceful to an historian to omit to record it, or to forbear from stigmatising it with the infamy which its unprecedented and causeless barbarity deserves. But it seems to have coincided with the feelings of his men, whom the long and frequent conflicts during the war had exasperated beyond measure ; and who now put forth unparalleled exertions, and encountered the most formidable dangers without shrinking : for the Dutch had the weather-gage, and the wind was especially favourable for the use of their fireships. Soon two of our vessels, the Oak and the Hunter, were in flames ; the Triumph, Blake's old ship, took fire, and seemed on the point of destruction, when the conflagration was happily checked. The battle was at its height, Van Tromp began at last to conceive hopes of a victory which might restore the fortunes of his country, when a musket-ball pierced his heart, and he fell dead on his quarter-deck. The intelligence of his fall spread quickly through both fleets ; his own men it utterly disheartened ; ship after ship fled from a conflict in which the loss of their great leader had rendered success hopeless. The English pursued with vigour, and with a cruelty too much in accordance with Monk's commands. When the battle was over, it was found that six-and-twenty Dutch ships had been burnt, that six had been sunk, while nearly five thousand of their men had been killed. The spirit of their Government was broken, and, without further resistance, they submitted to whatever terms Cromwell might think fit to impose : the most important of which, to a naval historian, was the obligation to salute the British flag in the Channel ; the refusal to pay



which compliment had originally been the immediate cause of the war.

The triumph had been great. Though the war had not lasted quite two years, the Dutch, by their own confession, had during its continuance lost, of men-of-war and merchantmen, at least eleven hundred vessels; our computation carried the prizes to a much higher number. And Cromwell's exultation was great, as it well might be, especially if he could have seen into futurity; for his renown among subsequent generations has been principally founded on his foreign policy; and the most brilliant parts of that policy were his naval wars, of which this with the Dutch was by far the most important, the most dangerous, and the most successful. The Commonwealth had renounced titles of honour, orders of chivalry, and hereditary rank; it consequently had no such rewards for its victorious admirals: still less did it confer grants or pensions. But it recompensed them after its fashion. By a vote of the parliament, heavy gold chains, descending in value with the gradations of their rank, were made for the principal officers. Medals were struck for the rest; and professional promotion was also dispensed, though with a sparing hand, among those whose merit had been most conspicuous. Blake and Monk, being admirals, were incapable of being raised higher; but Lawson was made a vice-admiral. Penn, who had hitherto been a vice-admiral, now succeeded to Deane's rank, and was rated as a sea-general. Captain Bodley too, whose gallant repulse of Van Galen we have recorded, was raised to the rank of rear-admiral. And if these rewards appear inadequate to eyes accustomed to modern liberality, the recipients of them at the time were abundantly satisfied with, and grateful for, this public and national recognition of their services.



## CHAPTER V.

1654—1688.

Cromwell attacks Spain—His duplicity—Blake at Tunis and Algiers—Penn fails at Hispaniola—Takes Jamaica—Blake at Malaga—Destroys the Spanish galleons at Santa Cruz—Dies—The Restoration—Sandwich's expedition against Algiers—Second Dutch war—Opdam is defeated—The Dutch make an alliance with France—De Ruyter defeats Monk in a four days' battle—Rupert defeats De Ruyter—De Ruyter enters the Thames—Destroys Sheerness—Great exploits of Sir E. Spragge—Peace—Spragge chastises the Algerines—The triple alliance with France—Third Dutch war—Four drawn battles—Harman's frigate action—Peace—Death of Charles II.—Revolution.

It seems probable that Cromwell conceived his genius to lie in the designing of warlike operations; and partly, no doubt, he thought, like other usurpers, that the glare of victory contributed to make the people acquiesce in his usurpation. Whatever were his motives, he had no sooner terminated the Dutch war than he began to consider how, and in what quarter, he might involve the kingdom in another. And, as Spain appeared the country likely to prove the easiest and also the richest victim, though he had no cause of quarrel to allege against her, he resolved to attack her, in the hope of wresting from her some of her West Indian colonies, to which she owed a great portion of her wealth and importance. His hostility was as treacherous as it was unprovoked. He did not even issue any declaration of war, for which indeed he would have been unable to find any pretext; but, in the winter of 1654, he sent out two powerful fleets, the one under Blake, the other under Penn, having on board a large body of soldiers, under the command of Colonel Venables. Neither Blake nor Penn knew their destination when they sailed. To prevent the slightest suspi-

cion of the real object of the expedition from getting abroad, they had sealed orders given them, which they were forbidden to open for some days : and then they found that Blake was to remain in Europe to intimidate Spain at home, while Penn was to proceed to America, to attack the most valuable of her West Indian settlements. At the same time, since it was of consequence that the Spaniards should have no suspicion of our unfriendly purpose, till Penn had struck his blow, Blake was ordered to enter the Mediterranean, and chastise the piratical cities on its southern coasts. While to such unparalleled height did Cromwell carry his duplicity and faithlessness, that he actually wrote a letter with his own hand to King Philip, assuring him that the sole object of this expedition was to protect the British trade ; and that the Admiral had especial and stringent orders to do no injury to any of the allies of England, and least of all to the Spaniards. The rovers from Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, who infested those waters, were the enemies of all countries alike ; plunder was their livelihood, torture and massacre their amusement : the Power which should avenge the injuries of all Christendom on these barbarians would deserve the gratitude of every nation ; and, if the object thus put forward did not secure co-operation, it would at least disarm suspicion. Towards Africa, then, Blake now directed his course : making Tunis his first point, because some pirates from that city had recently seized a squadron of English trading-vessels, and had made slaves of their crews. On the 8th of March, 1655, he sailed into Goletta Roads, demanding the restitution of the ships, the release of the captains, and ample reparation for the wrong done to them and to the honour of England in their persons. The Dey defied him ; bidding him “look at his castles of Goletta and Porto Farino, and do his worst.” And, in truth, they were most formidable forts, bristling with cannon and

strengthened with walls of enormous thickness, which their master might have been pardoned for believing invincible to the heaviest artillery that any fleet could bring against them. Blake, however, recollected St. Mary's and Jersey; and thought that, if he had subdued such forts as those islands possessed, though manned with English garrisons, no barbarians could defend theirs against him, whatever might be their strength. And that strength he resolved now to prove; though he felt it to be such as required all his address, as well as all his men's courage to encounter.

The Tunisians were marshalled on the shore ready for battle. To throw them off their guard Blake retreated; and it was not till disdain and consequent negligence had taken the place of their former resolution and watchfulness, that he returned, every ship prepared for an instant struggle. Not that he was ignorant of its dangers; at daybreak on the 4th of April, he caused divine service to be performed in every vessel in his squadron, and then he ranged up close to the Turkish batteries. His fleet consisted of twenty-five sail, his own flag flying on board the *St. George*. The castles themselves were not so much the objects of his attack as the fleet which lay under their shelter, and which had long been wont to carry terror and destruction from the Pillars of Hercules to the eastern shores of the Levant; and the ceaseless fire which he directed against the fortresses was chiefly intended to protect the smaller vessels, to which was entrusted the task of burning the Corsair shipping. The attack was completely successful: the castles themselves were breached in many places, and so shaken throughout that it was hardly to be doubted that Blake could have taken them, had he chosen to land his men for such a purpose; while every vessel that they had protected was totally destroyed. He had no need to repeat this exhibition of his power at Tripoli nor at Algiers. The Deys of both



those cities submitted to all his demands: though at Algiers, on a representation being made to him that the English slaves in that province were private property, he consented to pay a sum of money for their ransom; the Dey, on his part, undertaking that English vessels should for the future be safe from all molestation by his cruisers.

It was about the same time that Blake was thus chastising the African pirates, that Penn and Venables reached Hispaniola, the island which their sealed order prescribed to them as the object of their first attack. The enterprise failed in every part. Both fleet and army were found, when they came to action, to be so wretchedly provided that Penn (who was in his heart a loyalist, looking forward to the restoration of his country's lawful sovereign to his throne), believed that Cromwell had designedly betrayed him, and had sent him on a perilous expedition to which he had taken care that he should be unequal. There was not the least ground for such a suspicion; but it was certain that the fleet was not adequately provided with either food or ammunition. However the failure of the attempt on Hispaniola proved in the event more fortunate for their country than its success could have been; for, unwilling to return home without having done anything, the two commanders resolved to try their fortune against Jamaica. That magnificent island made no resistance, but surrendered without striking a single blow in its defence; and it was at once annexed to the British dominions, of which it has ever since been the most valuable possession in that quarter of the globe.

From intelligence which he had received from England, Blake now expected that the news of Penn's expedition would soon reach Spain; and, in obedience to his orders, he began to move towards Cadiz, that he might be in a position to check any efforts that the Spaniards, in their indignation, might make, to send out a force to cut Penn off on his return. As he was on his way to Gibraltar, an



occurrence took place, which (apart from the light it throws on the singular notions of statesmen of his time) has been too often alluded to with applause by British historians to be passed over without mention here. He had put into Malaga; and some of his sailors, who had landed and were rambling about the town, insulted a procession of priests whom they met carrying the Host through the streets. One of the priests in whom national pride prevailed over his peaceful calling, excited the populace to revenge the insult. They rose on the sailors, beat them severely, and drove them back to their ships. Blake took up the cause of his men; demanded that the priest should be surrendered to him, and threatened to burn the town if his demands were not complied with. Such a threat, from a man so well known to keep his word in such matters, was not to be slighted; and the priest was sent on board. Blake then inquired impartially into the whole transaction; condemned the conduct of his men, and dismissed the priest in safety, with the admonition, that, in future, complaints of his sailors' conduct were to be sent to him alone, as he would let the Spaniards and all the world know that Englishmen were only to be punished by Englishmen. No more preposterous claim in a foreign country was ever advanced: nevertheless, so great was the terror of his name, that the Spaniards, haughty as they usually were, acquiesced in it. And Cromwell, when he heard of the incident, reported the whole circumstance with the greatest exultation to his council, affirming that he would make the name of Englishman as great as the name of Roman ever had been. It must be added, that foreign nations in general appear to have coincided in his view of the transaction; and to have been impressed not so much with the arbitrary violation of every principle of law and justice involved in the pretension thus set forth, as with the boldness which could advance, and the power which could support and enforce it.

From Malaga Blake proceeded to Cadiz, arriving there about the same time that the news of Penn's operations in the West Indies reached Spain. Philip was enraged, both at the injury and the treachery ; but he was so far from being intimidated, that he at once seized upon all the English shipping in the Spanish harbours and all the property belonging to English merchants. The ships were about eighty ; the property was valued at a million of money. Yet neither the injury nor the retaliation were considered to amount to war ; for, in August, a splendid squadron sailed from Cadiz towards the West Indies, to protect the Silver Fleet which was expected to be on its way home ; and Blake, though he pursued it and watched it for some days, refrained from attacking it, because on examining his instructions he conceived that he had no authority to do so, but that "it was not the intention of Cromwell that he should be the first breaker of the peace." \*

He himself was in very bad health, his ships were greatly in need of repairs ; and, therefore, as in his eyes there was still peace, he returned to England. But he had hardly arrived before he learnt that Philip had formally declared war against us ; and he was again employed to superintend the equipment of a new fleet against the ensuing spring. He had a fine new ship, the *Naseby*, of seventy guns, for his own flag ; and a new comrade, Rear-Admiral Montague, who was destined hereafter to arrive at the highest rank and eminence in his profession, for his second in command. In February, 1656, he again sailed for the Spanish coast, where for some time he was forced to content himself with a blockade of the Tagus and of Cadiz. Cromwell was desirous that he should attack the ships in Cadiz harbour, or the city itself, or Gibraltar ; but, after mature consideration, the admirals

\* See his letter to Cromwell, dated August 30, 1655, quoted by Dixon from Thurlow.

decided against any such enterprises. Cadiz had been greatly strengthened since Drake's time, and Gibraltar was quite impregnable. Blake did, however, detach one squadron, which burnt some vessels in Malaga harbour and bombarded the town. Another squadron, under Captain Stayner, took two galleons coming from Mexico, laden with an enormous treasure in gold and jewels, and forming a portion of the great Silver Fleet. The treasure was sent to England, and conveyed from Portsmouth to London with great pomp, in thirty-eight waggons. Besides the vessels which he captured, Stayner had sunk two more; and this success only increased Blake's determination to make himself master of the whole fleet, or, at least, to prevent it from reaching Spain to furnish the nation means of protracting the war. Throughout the whole winter he kept up a strict blockade of the Spanish ports; and, in the spring of 1657, learning that the long expected galleons, which had heard of his threatening presence in the Spanish waters, had put into the harbour of Santa Cruz, in Teneriffe, he determined to seek them there. Accordingly, in April, he raised the blockade of Cadiz, and, with his whole force of twenty-five sail, made for the Canaries. There, on the 18th of that month, he found them. The entire flotilla consisted of twenty-two large vessels, all laden with the most precious merchandise that the New World could furnish, and heavily armed; though, of course, as being hampered by their cargoes, they were less available for warlike service than his own ships. But the harbour itself was also fortified with castles and batteries of great strength, which the governor thought fully equal to the defence of themselves and the galleons. And, when a Dutch vessel which was lying in the harbour prepared to escape, lest it should become involved in the destruction which it apprehended for the Spaniards, he contemptuously told her captain that "he might retire if he pleased, and that Blake might



come on if he dared." Blake did dare ; but, as the wind, which was blowing steadily into the harbour, would render it impracticable to bring the galleons out, if he succeeded in taking them, he resolved on limiting his efforts to destroying them where they lay. And that destruction he fully accomplished. He divided his force ; taking the attack of the castles on his own division, and leaving Stayner to assail the fleet. The British fire had never been more tremendous or more effective ; and both attacks succeeded completely. Blake drew the attention of the forts so wholly on himself that they were unable to molest Stayner, or to give any effective protection to their ships. And when, after a combat of four hours, he had silenced all opposition from the land, he was able to go to the assistance of that officer ; who, though apparently over-matched, had already made great progress in his work of destruction. In two hours more, every Spanish ship was either sunk or burnt ; and, though no prizes were made to enrich the captors, the loss to Spain was enormous. Hitherto it was Blake's unsurpassed boldness which had stood him in good stead : he was now to be equally well served by his good fortune. Though his loss of life had been comparatively small, many of his ships had been much crippled by the enemy's fire, while it was likely that the forts and batteries on shore would be soon able to renew their cannonade. The wind too still blew right into the harbour, and under these circumstances he was anxiously considering how to effect his retreat, when suddenly the wind changed, bearing his ships out as merrily as it had borne them in ; and before evening they were all in the offing, safe and out of reach of harm from the enraged enemy.

This was the great Admiral's last service. His health had long been failing, and was now quite broken ; long confinement on board his ship had affected him with both dropsy and scurvy, to which his incessant exertions



against the enemy had prevented him from paying proper attention. Once more he set sail for England, picking up several prizes of value off the Spanish coast on his way; and, by the terror of his name compelling the governor of Sallee to release a number of Christian captives whom he held in slavery. He was destined once more to see, but not again to enjoy his native land. As he proceeded on his way, he daily grew worse and worse; soon he was altogether confined to his cabin. On the 17th of August his ship entered Plymouth Sound, but he died before she could anchor, leaving behind him an illustrious name as one of the most successful of our sailors, and one of the purest of our patriots; who, while disapproving of her government, faithfully served his country, looking not so much to the policy of her temporary masters as to her permanent glory and her solid advantage, and in that glory laying the foundation of his own. Even the Royalists admired and extolled him, though his victories had cruelly checked their hopes of an early restoration. And his contemporary, Clarendon, in his immortal History gives him the candid and cordial praise that "He was the first man who brought ships to condemn castles on shore; which had been thought ever very formidable, and were discovered by him to make a noise only, and to fright those who could rarely be hurt by them; and though he hath been very well imitated and followed, he was the first that gave the example of that kind of naval courage and bold resolute achievement."

For some years after his death the history of our navy is marked by no great warlike exploit. In 1658 Cromwell himself died; and in the spring of 1660 Charles II. was restored to his throne, to the very general joy of the people. Montague, who after Blake's death had been the naval officer chiefly employed, was, with Lawson, the principal agent in securing the fleet to the Royal cause. He commanded the squadron which conveyed the restored

monarch to England ; and was made Earl of Sandwich, in recognition of the services he had performed on this occasion : while Lawson, Stayner, and Ayscough were knighted, partly for their exploits in the cause of their country in the late wars ; partly and probably more, as a recompense for their well known affection for the Royal cause, which, even while serving under the Commonwealth, they had not kept entirely secret. Altogether the navy was in high favour at the new court. The Duke of York directed his particular attention to it, and received the highest rank in it from his brother ; and as soon as war broke out, he assumed the command of the fleet employed, taking an active share in the first operations of the war, fighting several hardly contested battles, and gaining one important victory, though the credit which it acquired for him was rather a reputation for pertinacious resolution than for professional skill and talent.

The only undertaking which threatened the least danger or difficulty for the first four years of the new reign, was one in which Sandwich, with Lawson for his vice-admiral, sailed against the Algerines ; whose fear of our power had been so much lessened by Blake's death, that they had again begun to commit depredations on our shipping. Sandwich anchored off the bay of Algiers, and, having secured the safety of our consul by receiving him on board his fleet, required the Dey to renew his treaty, with an additional clause binding him to abstain from molesting British vessels for the future. On receiving a refusal, he cannonaded the city from a distance, the wind preventing him from approaching sufficiently near to do much damage ; and then quitting the Mediterranean, he left Lawson in front of the city with a squadron, which, when the wind changed, soon brought the Dey to reason, and compelled him to accede to our terms.

Meanwhile a hostile feeling was rapidly reviving between us and the Dutch. The ostensible grievances

were slight : the Dutch complained that we were unduly exacting in the matter of the salute which we demanded ; we alleged that they had unfairly occupied Cape Coast Castle on the African coast, which belonged to one of our mercantile companies. The real cause of the war probably was that they had not yet forgotten nor forgiven us for their defeats in Blake's time ; and that they fancied themselves now strong enough to retrieve their honour. At first hostilities were confined to the trading-companies of the two nations ; though the Duke of York, who, besides his office of high-admiral, was patron of our African Company, lent the merchants who constituted it some of the Royal frigates, under command of Sir Robert Holmes, to make reprisals. Sir Robert's retaliation was ample. He recovered Cape Coast Castle ; he took the island of Goree ; he made prizes of several Dutch vessels ; and, crossing the Atlantic to the principal Dutch settlement in North America, he reduced that also, and, in honour of his royal patron, gave it the name of New York, which it retains to the present day. The Government of Holland being more subject to commercial influences than ours, made these injuries of its traders its own ; sending De Ruyter with a squadron into the Atlantic, where he took some of our forts, and no inconsiderable number of our merchantmen. And, almost immediately after he returned, at the beginning of 1665, they formally declared war against Great Britain. We were as eager as they were : in fact, their trade at this time being greater than ours, they were of the two countries the most exposed to injury. And, indeed, war had hardly been declared before they began to suffer ; two very large fleets of merchantmen belonging to the ports of Holland, being encountered by a squadron of our cruisers, which captured nearly the whole of them. The event of the war, however, was not to depend upon casualties such as these. Both nations began to exert their



resources to the utmost to prepare fleets of a grandeur worthy to contend once more for the mastery of the sea. And both succeeded : for, if the size as well as the number of the ships now fitted out, be taken into the account, no fleets of equal power have ever been arrayed under one command. We had a hundred and fourteen ships of war, and twenty-eight fireships ; with the King's brother the Duke of York, the King's first cousin Prince Rupert, and Lord Sandwich for our admirals. Lawson, brilliant as was his reputation, had only his single ship. The Dutch had a hundred and three ships of war and eleven fireships ; while, though in the war with Cromwell their ships had been on the whole of inferior size to ours, some of them now were larger than the finest which we possessed. Their commander-in-chief was Opdam, a pupil of Van Tromp ; with Cornelius Van Tromp, a son of their former hero, and Evertzen, whose skill and courage had already been tried in countless battles, for his principal colleagues. On the 3rd of June the two fleets met at no great distance from Lowestoft on the Suffolk coast. The battle was fierce and long ; but, from the very beginning, the skill of the English proved to be superior. Their first manœuvres gave them the advantage of the weather-gage. When the fight had lasted several hours without any decisive advantage having been gained by either side, Sandwich repeated Lawson's manœuvre of breaking the enemy's line, and, cutting it into two, threw it into great confusion. Accident also helped us. Opdam's ship blew up, and he and all his crew perished. Some of the Dutch vessels ran foul of one another, and got so entangled together that several were burnt by a single fireship. At last, when the battle had been continued during the whole of a summer day, Van Tromp, whom Opdam's death had left as commander-in-chief, retreated in as good order as he could ; leaving us an undisputed victory. We claimed to have taken or de-



stroyed above thirty ships, and the enemy themselves confessed a loss of nearly twenty. We lost but one ship, the *Charity*. Nor was the number of our killed and wounded great; though among them we had to reckon Sir John Lawson, and several young noblemen who had joined the fleet as volunteers, and who made a kind of merit of exposing themselves with the most fearless but unskilful gallantry. The only drawback to the greatness of the victory was, that, by the unanimous confession of all engaged in it, we might have done more. The most probable reason alleged why we did not, being that the Duke of York's officers were more tender of exposing him to danger than he himself had been; and that, as soon as he had gone to rest, they took it upon themselves to shorten sail, that he, who was presumptive heir to the crown, might not be endangered by too vigorous a pursuit of an enemy already beaten and flying. Indeed, Brouncker, the officer to whom the hindrance of the pursuit, with this object, was chiefly imputed, was dismissed from the Duke's service, and expelled from the House of Commons of which he was a member, on account of his conduct.

Heavy as this blow had been, the Dutch were not disheartened by it. They repaired their old ships, launched and equipped new ones; and the next year they again put to sea with a fleet but little inferior to the former, with Van Tromp's old colleague, De Ruyter, for commander-in-chief. It was probably some hindrance to this great officer that De Witt, now the pensionary or chief minister of Holland, again took a share in the command; for De Witt, though a man of great courage, great general capacity, and great aptitude for scientific combinations, had no practical knowledge of naval affairs, and very little experience in war. The Dutch founded great hopes on an alliance which they had recently contracted with the French, who promised to join them with a numerous and powerful squadron; while their own

forces again amounted to nearly a hundred sail. The fleet which we equipped was almost equal in numbers ; and our commanders also were to some extent changed, for the Duke of York remained on shore, Lord Sandwich had been sent as ambassador to Madrid, and the admirals now to be opposed to De Ruyter were Prince Rupert and Monk, who, at the Restoration, had been raised to the peerage as Duke of Albemarle. Unhappily, just before the two fleets met, false intelligence was received in England that the reinforcement which the French had promised the Dutch was at Belleisle, and ready to sail ; on which the king sent orders to Rupert to repair with his division to the mouth of the Channel, to encounter it before it could effect the intended junction with De Ruyter. And his departure reduced the British fleet to sixty ships : a very unequal match for the splendid force of ninety-one ships and thirteen fireships, with which, on the 1st of June, De Ruyter encountered Albemarle in midchannel between the Essex and the Dutch coasts. In a subsequent generation the same day acquired a wider renown from the victory with which Lord Howe led the way to our naval triumphs in the French revolutionary war ; but the courage displayed by our victorious seamen on that more fortunate occasion could not surpass that with which they now contended against odds that to men of any other country would have appeared overwhelming. Monk himself, though a man of but little talent, and of an energy very inferior to that of Rupert, in stubborn endurance was as unflinching as any man alive ; and, though somewhat taken by surprise by the magnitude of De Ruyter's force, never thought of retreating. The battle which ensued, with the exception of the conflict with the Armada, is the longest in the history of war. It lasted four days. Each night the fleets spent in repairing the damage of the preceding day, and each morning they renewed the combat with unabated animosity and vigour. There was

little manœuvring; all was plain hard fighting, and the carnage on each side was dreadful. In such a fight numerical odds of course told with great effect: the first and the second day we lost several ships and several gallant officers; though they did not fall unavenged, as one or two Dutch ships were also destroyed. Evertzen and another admiral were killed, while De Ruyter himself was for a time in the most imminent danger: still, as every hour increased the preponderance of the enemy, Monk began to apprehend the total destruction of his fleet, when on the third day he was rejoined by Rupert. That indefatigable prince had made his way to Ushant; and there, finding that no French fleet was in sight, and that none was believed to be in the neighbourhood, (in point of fact the ships that had been promised to the Dutch were still in the Mediterranean,) at once returned with all speed, impatient to rejoin his colleague and take his share in a battle which he knew could not be far distant. No more timely reinforcement ever came. According to the statement made by Sir John Harman, one of Monk's best officers, when Rupert came in sight there were but sixteen ships in the British fleet able to continue the engagement; and still with these sixteen Monk was fighting bravely. The arrival of Rupert's division, though it did not now bring his numbers up to a level with those of the enemy, nevertheless, consisting as it did of fresh ships, appeared to put the two fleets on such an equality of real strength that Monk thought it might enable him yet to retrieve the battle; and he had no difficulty in persuading the Prince, who was ever eager for conflict, to renew the engagement on the fourth day. The Dutch, satisfied with the advantages they had gained, and not inclined to risk them by any further struggle after Monk had been so strongly reinforced, had begun to fall back towards their own harbours. The British pursued and again attacked them, when it soon became apparent that De Ruyter's re-



treat had been dictated by prudence rather than by weakness ; for, in spite of the freshness of Rupert's crews, his superiority in numbers still enabled him to inflict far more damage than he sustained. At last, on the evening of the fourth day, the British Admirals drew off, and acknowledged a defeat, which, considering the circumstances under which the battle had been commenced, was no disgrace.

It had, however, been a serious blow. As was usual in those days, the official reports of the loss we had sustained varied greatly. But it seems certain that the Dutch had taken and destroyed upwards of twenty of our ships, and had wholly disabled many more ; that two of our admirals, Sir W. Berkeley and Sir Christopher Minns, had been slain, and one, Sir G. Ayscough, had been taken prisoner. De Ruyter also had lost some ships, and some of his best officers ; and both the fleets were equally glad of a respite to repair their damages. That we had lost no reputation by the result of the late battle, was even the judgment of De Witt himself, who, with reference to it, declared of our seamen, that " their defeat did them more honour than all their former victories. The Dutch fleet could never have been brought on again after such a fight as that on the first day ; and he believed none but the English could. And all that the Dutch had discovered was that Englishmen might be killed, and English ships might be burnt, but that English courage was invincible."\* The two fleets were soon ready for another struggle. By the 25th of July they were again cruising off the North Foreland in search of each other, and a second battle took place, in which the Prince and Monk wholly retrieved the fortune and honour of their country. Ship after ship of the Dutch struck its flag, or was burnt by the fireships. De Ruyter himself, when he saw the day irretrievably lost, courted death ; lamenting his fate that, while thousands of bullets were flying round him, not one could be found

\* Urequefort, '*Histoire des Provinces Unies*,' liv. xv., quoted by Campbell.



to put an end to his life. He, however, remained unhurt ; but his colleague, Cornelius Van Tromp, had a narrow escape of being taken by an officer who had lately risen to eminence, and who, though spared for but a short career, left behind him a professional reputation scarcely surpassed by any of his contemporaries, Edward Spragge. The close of the day showed that we had gained a most decisive victory. We had lost one ship, the *Resolution*, which was burnt by the enemy's fireships, and we had about three hundred men killed and wounded. We had taken or destroyed twenty sail of the enemy : while their killed and wounded amounted to the vast number of seven thousand men. Rupert followed up his victory with great energy. As soon as the wind would allow him, he crossed over to the Dutch coast, where he burnt or sunk an enormous fleet of richly-laden merchantmen ; then he landed on the isle of Schelling, where he burnt the chief town, called *Bandaris*, with extensive magazines of naval stores, which formed an important portion of it, and returned in triumph to England for the winter.

By this time the Dutch were weary of the war. Their losses had been very great ; and they got no effectual assistance from their French allies. A fleet did, indeed, come forth from the French harbours with the intention of joining them ; but, being attacked by Sir Thomas Allen with an equal force, it quickly retreated, leaving one fine fifty-gun ship, the *Ruby*, in Allen's hands, and made no further attempt to take any part in the war. We also were inclined for peace ; for not only was Charles's treasury nearly empty, but he preferred spending the little it did contain on objects to him more attractive than the prosecution of any war, however glorious. Accordingly the King's Government willingly listened to the overtures which the Dutch made for a treaty ; while the ministers of Louis, who desired to see both countries weakened, contrived that the negotiations should be pro-

tracted, and are believed at the same time to have encouraged the Dutch to try and counterbalance our late success by striking one unexpected and severe blow at our very vitals, while we were thrown off our guard. In the whole history of the nation, England has never been so ill-governed as at this time, when the selfish sensuality of the King, and the corrupt and profligate negligence of his ministers, postponed every consideration of the honour and welfare of the Kingdom; the one to his own momentary enjoyment, the other to the gratification of the monarch's caprices, indolence, or profligacy. The moment the negociations were commenced, it was suggested to Charles, by the French Court, that he could give no better proof of the good faith with which he was entering into them than would be afforded by the reduction of his armaments. He listened eagerly to advice which, by sparing his exchequer, promised to leave him funds at his disposal to squander among his mistresses. His ships were laid up in ordinary; his seamen were disbanded. The spring of 1667, instead of the mighty fleets which Blake and Rupert had led to victory, saw but two small squadrons cruising listlessly about the Nore and Spithead: while the Dutch had spent the winter in diligently repairing their losses, and now had in the harbours opposite to our shores a splendid fleet of, including fireships, above a hundred sail.

No armistice had been agreed upon; and, at the beginning of June, De Ruyter, at the head of the whole naval force of his country, sailed into the Thames. Instant intelligence of his appearance reached London; and never before nor since has the capital been in such a state of alarm, nor in such real danger. It knew itself rich enough to tempt an enemy, and it believed itself utterly defenceless. Almost at the beginning of the new reign, the Duke of York had pointed out the necessity of fortifying the banks of the river, and some batteries and earthworks had been commenced; but, as the danger did not appear to be

pressing, they had never been completed. Then was seen what a few intrepid spirits could do to save a kingdom. Rupert was not at hand ; and, in his absence, the general voice called upon Monk to take the command. He, with Spragge and one or two others of his most approved officers, at once hastened to the scene of the greatest danger. He had nearly been too late to render any service. Already De Ruyter had destroyed Sheerness ; but Monk entered the Medway before him, and threw a strong boom across the river. After many efforts it was broken by a Dutch captain, named Brahell, and De Ruyter advanced as far as Upnor, burning some of our finest ships, though he also lost two vessels himself. The citizens of the metropolis now began to fear he would reach them, and sank ships at Woolwich and Blackwall to impede his progress. But the resistance which Monk had made, though unsuccessful in its immediate object, had gained valuable time ; and when De Ruyter regained the open channel he found Spragge had collected a squadron, greatly inferior indeed to his own in numbers, but formidable from the spirit of the seamen and the skill of their commander, to check his further ravages. Spragge even ventured to attack him, and with his fireships at first inflicted considerable damage on his fleet, though he himself was soon forced to retreat under the protection of the batteries of Tilbury. As nothing more was to be done in the Thames, De Ruyter sailed against Portsmouth, and from thence he proceeded to Torbay ; but he was baffled in each attempt. He returned to the mouth of the Thames, designing to attack our forts on the Essex coast, but again he was encountered and defeated by Spragge ; and presently intelligence reached him that a treaty of peace had been actually signed on the 21st of July. The damage that he had done had not been really important. We had before that time lost more ships in actions in which we had been victorious ; but the disgrace of being thus insulted in our



own harbours and our own river was great, unprecedented, and by any other king would have been thought intolerable. Charles, however, was not led by any such considerations to abate his eagerness for a peace which should leave him at liberty to pursue his pleasures without interruption. He had not even the excuse of knowing, when he signed the treaty, that successes had been gained in the West Indies and South America over both the Dutch and the French, which, in solid advantage, more than counterbalanced the injury which De Ruyter had inflicted. We had taken St. Eustatia, Tobago, and the settlement of Surinam ; and Sir John Harman had also defeated the combined squadrons of France and Holland in a pitched battle, in which the Dutch had lost one or two vessels, and the French every ship but two that was engaged. Some of the acquisitions thus made were subsequently restored when the peace was signed ; but we preserved enough to show that, on the whole, the results of the war had been far less injurious to us than to the enemy.

We now had peace with all the European powers for nearly five years : and the only enterprise in which the navy was engaged during that time was a fresh chastisement of the Algerines. Though, in 1662, they had submitted to Sandwich and Lawson, on the withdrawal of the fleet they broke their promises, and the complaints of our merchants and shipowners had now become too loud and too universal to be disregarded even by such a ministry as the Cabal. At first we were content to act in concert with the Dutch, and to send a small combined squadron, which destroyed several Algerine vessels, and released a number of Christian slaves ; but in the actions which took place our commanders showed so much more skill than the Dutch, and gained so much more credit, that our allies drew back, and left us to complete the work by ourselves. At last, in 1670, we sent out Sir Edward Spragge, who had been Lord Sandwich's captain in the expedition



of 1662 ; and, though the force under his command, consisting, as it did, of only six frigates and one fireship, seemed hardly adequate to the undertaking, his skill triumphed over all obstacles, and brought it to a triumphant conclusion. The principal fleet of the pirates lay in the harbour of Boujayah, which they had protected by a strong boom thrown across the entrance, and which was commanded by well-fortified castles. Spragge broke the boom, silenced and nearly destroyed the castles, and captured or burnt the whole of their shipping. The Algerines rose in revolt against their Government, put the reigning Dey to death, and made ample submission to the English Admiral. Even now they had hardly received a sufficient lesson : for before the end of this reign it was found necessary to send Admiral Herbert against them with another squadron. But the mere sight of his force recalled to the minds of the Algerines so lively a recollection of the chastisement they had received from Spragge that they at once submitted ; and afterwards, though they plundered every one else, it was long before they ventured again to insult the British flag.

The nation had rejoiced at the peace made with the Dutch in 1667 ; and congratulated itself still more in the following year, on the triple alliance concluded with Holland and Sweden. That alliance was in itself a recognition of the fact that France was the power whose designs were really most hostile to us and to the liberties of Europe ; and thus seemed not only to secure us against any renewal of our former wars, but to have provided us with a valuable and trusty comrade in a new one which, if we steadily adhered to English interests, deeply involved as they were in the maintenance of Protestant liberty on the Continent, was almost inevitable. Unhappily, the worthless ministers who allowed Temple to negociate that treaty had no intention of keeping it. Even while the exultation on the subject in London was fresh, Clifford ventured to say

openly that, in spite of the exultation, and in spite of the treaty, there would soon be another Dutch war. It is easy to prophesy truly when the accomplishment of the prophecy depends on oneself; but neither were the ministers themselves, nor even Clifford, who, being a Roman Catholic, might have seemed marked out by his religion for such a confidence, trusted with the whole of the King's secrets and designs. It was known that the Duke of York had become a Roman Catholic, but nobody suspected that Charles had followed his example. Such, however, was the fact; and, full of the zeal of a new convert, he had formed the project of bringing over the whole of his subjects to the same persuasion. With this view he proposed to Louis XIV. to lend him a large sum of money, and a body of French troops, with which to compel the assent of the English nation to his new creed; when the conversion of the kingdom was to be followed by a war upon Holland, which was to be dismembered and divided between the two sovereigns, a small portion of it being reserved as a principality for Charles's nephew, William of Orange. Louis was willing enough to bind Charles to his interests by a loan; he was still more willing to keep a French force in England. He also thought it became him, as the Great Monarch he called himself, to impose the form of religion which he professed on as many nations as possible; but, since he did not share Charles's views as to the practicability of converting England by force, he desired that the subjugation of Holland should precede such an attempt; and, after some trouble, he persuaded the English King to agree to this order of operations.

In the prosecution of this design upon Holland, Charles appears to have acted with greater steadiness than he ever showed on any other occasion, and also with more consummate hypocrisy and faithlessness. He knew that the parliament and the nation were favourable to the Dutch, and hostile to any French alliance; and that they would

never, with their eyes open, furnish him with means of combining with France, much less of attacking Holland. He therefore feigned a firm adherence to the principles of the triple alliance, and demanded of his Parliament a large sum of money and a powerful fleet, to enable him to assist his allies against the aggressions of Louis. For such a purpose all that he asked was willingly granted ; and the moment that he considered himself sufficiently provided, he prepared to throw off the mask. But, having thus cheated his subjects, he did not think himself bound to act more fairly towards those whom he meant to make his enemies. Cromwell had set the example of commencing war without declaring it; and in this respect Charles looked on his conduct as a model to be imitated. Just at this moment the merchants of Amsterdam were expecting the return of the Smyrna fleet, which was laden with as valuable merchandise as ever came to Europe from any Eastern port. To intercept it, Sir Robert Holmes was sent out, in March, 1672, with a small but picked squadron ; and, at the entrance to the Channel, he fell in with it. The Dutch, though taken by surprise, stood gallantly on their defence. Some of their vessels were well armed, and their entire number was very great. Altogether the resistance was, as it deserved to be, more successful than the attack. One of the Dutch ships was sunk, and four more were taken ; but the remainder escaped, and reached their own harbours in safety : so that the advantage derived from this deed of treachery was by no means sufficient to compensate the infamy attending it. After this flagrant act, any further concealment of our intentions was impossible ; and accordingly a few days afterwards, Charles and Louis formally declared war against Holland with scarcely a plausible pretext to justify such a measure. The rupture with Holland was more disgraceful to us than to the French ; since they were not bound to that country by any express treaty as we were ; but, when the war



was begun, Charles acted with better faith to his new ally than that ally displayed towards him. Charles shewed that he was really desirous to subdue Holland: but the design of Louis appeared to be, as in a previous instance, rather to allow us and the Dutch to weaken ourselves in a mutual contest, and then to gain advantages for himself from the straits to which we should both be reduced. During the five years of peace both nations had so far recruited their strength that they were able to equip formidable fleets without delay. The Dutch placed above ninety\* ships and forty fireships under the command of their tried servant De Ruyter. We put to sea with sixty-five ships under the command of the Duke of York and Lord Sandwich, to which the French added thirty-six more; so that, except in the article of fireships, the contending powers were pretty equal. The Dutch began hostilities with the greatest boldness. Our fleet, with the French, was lying in Solebay on the coast of Suffolk, when, on the 28th of May, De Ruyter sailed in and attacked it. He had nearly taken the Duke of York by surprise; but the steady courage of our sailors soon deprived him of the advantage which he hoped to gain, and for a short time did gain from that circumstance; and a battle ensued, which, for the stubbornness with which it was maintained, had not been surpassed even by those of the former war. Our superiority in number was only apparent, for the French took no part in the battle; and it was reported that Count d'Estrées, their admiral, was acting in obedience to express orders in keeping aloof: so that the whole brunt of the action fell on the English ships. With such odds against them, it was no small glory to make a drawn battle: they had even some pretext for claiming a victory, since the only prize taken in the battle was the *Staveren*, of seventy guns, one of the finest ships in the Dutch fleet. On the other hand, our losses from fireships exceeded

\* *Rapin* reduces this number to seventy-two.



those of the enemy. Four of our vessels were burnt, and among them the *Royal James*, the flagship of Lord Sandwich, who perished with the greater part of his crew in the flames. Sandwich might undoubtedly have saved himself, but he refused to quit his ship. It is said that, while the fleet was lying in Solebay before the Dutch appeared, he had pointed out to the Duke of York how entirely we were exposed to a sudden attack, and had recommended some alterations in the arrangement of the ships ; but that the Duke scorned his advice : reproaching him for it, as being dictated more by fear than by skill. And stung by the undeserved taunt Sandwich was resolved not to survive the battle. Two French frigates also were overtaken by the fireships, and burnt. The Dutch only lost three ships, and claimed the victory ; but their inaction in their own harbours for the rest of the summer showed that they did not really believe in the claim they thus advanced.

The next year the operation of the Test Act, which, in spite of all the efforts of the Court, the Parliament had passed against the Roman Catholics, obliged the Duke of York to resign his command ; and Rupert and Spragge succeeded that prince and Lord Sandwich. The first battle took place on the anniversary of that of Solebay in the preceding year ; and it was followed by two more, one on June 4th, the other on August 11th. The general characteristics of all three were the same. The desertion of the French, of whose fleet scarcely one ship fired a shot, taxed all the skill of the British Admirals, and all the courage of their crews to avoid defeat ; but it was avoided. The Dutch, indeed, claimed the victory in each instance ; but they had no prizes nor trophies to show, nor could they deny that their losses fully equalled our own. In the last battle, one of the French officers, Admiral de Martel, in some degree redeemed the honour of his countrymen, exposing himself gallantly with his single ship, and try-

ing to encourage his comrades to follow his example ; assuring them that, if they did so, Rupert's victory could not fail to be complete and decisive. He was more brave and honest than wise ; for the reward which he received on his return home was he sent to the Bastile for his pains. This last fight was also rendered memorable to us by the death of Spragge himself. In it, as well as in the preceding engagements, he and Cornelius Van Tromp had singled out each other as if they were inspired by some personal animosity. So heavy was the fire which each directed against his antagonist, that presently each found his own ship disabled, and quitted it to continue the deadly combat in another. Spragge exchanged the Royal Prince for the St. George ; and Van Tromp shifted his flag from the Golden Lion to the Comet. After a time, the St. George also became too much crippled to continue the action, and Spragge quitted her for the Royal Charles ; but, as he was crossing to his new ship, a shot pierced the boat which was conveying him to her, and he was drowned, to the great grief of the fleet, the nation, and of his gallant adversary himself.

That, in spite of their boasts, the advantage in these battles had not been on the side of the Dutch, is proved by the fact, that at the beginning of the year 1674 they solicited peace, which Charles, who knew it would be difficult to persuade the Parliament to grant him supplies to continue the war, was in no condition to refuse. While the terms of the treaty were being adjusted by the negociators, one more engagement took place, which must not be passed over, since it was the first of those frigate actions, or combats between single vessels, which, in subsequent generations, became so fertile a source of glory to our naval officers. Captain Harman, in the Tiger, of forty guns, and Captain de Witt of the Schaerlaes, of thirty-six, were both at the same time repairing damages in Cadiz harbour. A challenge to go forth into the open sea to fight for the

honour of their respective countries, was given and accepted ; and on a day appointed the battle took place in sight of the citizens of Cadiz, who thronged the shore to witness it. The Tiger was stronger than her opponent by four guns, but weaker by 90 men ; but the superior gunnery of the English soon equalized the numbers of the crews. The first broadside of the Tiger killed or wounded 80 men, and brought the mainmast of the *Schaerlaes* by the board, while the Tiger's loss in the whole action was only 24 men. Very soon the English seamen boarded and carried the *Schaerlaes* ; and thus Captain Harman may fairly claim the honour of having triumphantly inaugurated that species of engagement which, notwithstanding occasional reverses, on the whole has furnished our naval annals with a series of as glorious exploits as any country can boast.

Thus was concluded the last war in which we were ever engaged against the Dutch, except during the time when that country was under the dominion or influence of revolutionary France ; and the battles of 1673 were the last naval enterprises of Charles's reign, with the exception of an expedition against Tripoli, on which Sir John Narborough was sent with a squadron to chastise the pirates of that territory, who had long imitated the depredations of the Tunisians and Algerines. The expedition was completely successful, and is chiefly remarkable as having afforded the first occasion for the display of the talents of Lieutenant Cloudesley Shovel, who subsequently became one of our most distinguished admirals. The attack on the ships in the harbour of Tripoli was executed by boats under Shovel's command ; who, by a happy mixture of audacity and skill, having seized the guardboat and prevented it from giving the alarm, made his way in, set the whole fleet on fire, and returned in safety to his ship without having lost a single man.

James's short and troubled reign afforded no opportunity for any enterprise against foreign enemies. Had he



not alienated his subjects by his arbitrary and illegal acts, a well-equipped fleet would have found it easy to crush the enterprise of William of Orange; or, rather, William would never have undertaken it had he not been sure beforehand of meeting with no opposition from such a quarter. In fact, Admiral Herbert, at that moment the most distinguished officer in the navy (for Rupert had died in 1682), had joined him, and was the chief officer of the fleet which bore him to England; while Lord Dartmouth, to whom was given the command of that squadron which James could still trust, was prevented, by a long continuance of foul winds, from leaving the Thames, till the invader of the kingdom had landed in Torbay. And soon even Dartmouth's fidelity was disgusted by his sovereign's faithlessness: he openly refused obedience to the order which he received to convey the infant Prince of Wales to France; and stationed ships across Portsmouth harbour to intercept him, in case any serious attempt should be made to carry such a project into execution. A few more days terminated the reign of the Stuarts. Before the year 1689 opened, James was at St. Germain's and William in London. With the Revolution begins the period of Constitutional liberty in England. And it is only natural that the secure establishment of freedom should produce its fruit in every department; that men, who had fought bravely for an arbitrary Government should fight with still greater resolution for a freedom of which they had the monopoly; and (though in Charles's reign, as we have seen, they could hardly maintain a successful struggle against a single state, and that not one of the highest rank), that under the new dynasty they should speedily raise their country to the proud position of the Mistress of the Seas, which she has ever since retained; and which, as long as the memory of those heroic spirits who gained for her that pre-eminence is cherished with fitting honour and reverence, we may well hope that she ever will retain.



## CHAPTER VI.

1689—1698.

Effects of the Revolution on our relations with France, and therefore on the navy—Louis sends aid to James in Ireland—Battle of Bantry Bay—Activity of Rooke and Killigrew—Battle off Beachy Head—Skill of Shovel—Russell supersedes Lord Torrington—Our successes in the West Indies—Obstinate folly of James—Battle of La Hogue—Success of French privateers—Russell is superseded—De Tourville's success off Lagos—Benbow bombards St. Malo—Russell is restored to the command—Failure of the attack on Brest—Russell relieves Barcelona—Victory of Killigrew's squadron—De Tourville fears to face Russell—Activity of Benbow and Neville—Peace of Ryswic—Rooke's expedition to the Baltic.

THE Revolution which drove James from the throne wrought a permanent change in our relations with France. For the century preceding that event we had been for the most part on terms of friendship and cordiality with her. Elizabeth had been an useful ally to Henry IV. in the long contest which ended in placing him on the throne ; and the connexion thus commenced had been cemented by the marriage of the first Charles to the daughter of that great prince. Our two last sovereigns had been first-cousins of the reigning French monarch ; and the selfishness of the one and the bigotry of the other had made them also his pensioners and his tools. It was therefore with no feigned or temporary indignation that Louis saw James expelled from his kingdom, and replaced by one who, even while possessed of a far more limited authority over a far inferior state, had not feared to proclaim himself his enemy on principle. Considerations of policy as well as of kindred combined to make him espouse the cause of the exiled King, and to assume an attitude of uncompromising hostility towards the Prince, whom he regarded as an usurper. During the remaining quarter of a century of his reign enmity to England and its new

dynasty became the ruling principle of French politics, which was unreservedly adopted by his successors. We, on our part, were not slow to imbibe a similar feeling, which actuated both countries with but little intermission, till, after the most terrible war recorded in the history of the world, the French throne was recovered by a prince who was indebted to us for hospitality and protection, similar to that which James had received from his ancestor. The intervening period, of above a century and a quarter, is one of which the normal condition was war; interrupted here and there by occasional treaties of so transitory a character that they seemed little better than breathing times to be employed in recruiting the strength for a fresh struggle. As was inevitable from the situation of the two countries, these wars were carried on principally at sea; so that it is to the Revolution also that we may trace the position of paramount importance which the naval service has ever since held in the estimation of English statesmen, and the affections of the English people.

William had been scarcely two months established on the throne when the first challenge was given by Louis, who in March, 1689, sent a powerful fleet of thirty-seven ships to escort James to Kinsale with a small body of English and Irish soldiers, who still adhered to his fortunes. Ever since the conclusion of our last peace with the Dutch the national treasures had been so constantly squandered on less worthy objects that the entire resources of the kingdom were not able to equip a corresponding force. Admiral Herbert was at once sent to the same quarter with all the ships that were ready, but they were only a dozen; nor did the reinforcements which he subsequently received raise his numbers to above twenty-two. With these, on the 15th of May, he encountered the French fleet off Bantry Bay, on their return to their own shores. The French Admiral, Château Renault, had left a squadron at Kinsale in case James might re-

quire its assistance : but had still six ships more than Herbert. The engagement which ensued, though usually dignified with the name of a battle, was in reality little more than a distant skirmish. The Frenchman might easily have given it a different character had he been inclined to do so, since he had the weather-gage ; but after interchanging a distant cannonade of little more than an hour, in which he certainly sustained more damage than he inflicted, he fell back into the bay, into which the Englishman did not venture to follow him. Herbert, however, sent home a flourishing account of his successful resistance to a superior force ; and William, who thought it highly politic, at the outset of the war, to put the best countenance on all that had taken place, created him Earl of Torrington, as gainer of the victory ; knighted two of his captains, Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and Sir John Ashby ; and gave rewards in money to every seaman in the fleet.

A war with France, while Ireland was, as for the next few years it may almost be called, a hostile country, compelled our fleets to take a wide range ; since Louis, not content with his harbours in the north and west, had lately established a considerable arsenal at Toulon, which he hoped might enable him to make himself master of the Mediterranean, and which imposed on us the necessity of keeping a squadron continually in that sea to protect British interests. Fortunately, though our navy was as yet neither numerous nor in good condition, our officers were sufficiently brave and skilful to make up for the deficiencies of the instruments with which they had to work. Captain, afterwards Sir George Rooke, though he had but a small squadron under his orders, was yet so indefatigable in cruising round the Irish coast that he deterred the French privateers, on whose co-operation James had greatly relied for preventing William's army from receiving supplies or reinforcements from England, from attempting any enterprise in that quarter. And



Admiral Killigrew was equally useful in the sea between Cadiz and Toulon, harassing and chasing the French fleet when it left that harbour ; and effectually deterring it from keeping the open sea, where its presence would have been most dangerous and mischievous to our merchantmen.

Both nations during the winter paid great attention to increasing their navy. William also procured the promise of a strong reinforcement from Holland ; and, when, in the spring of 1690, Lord Torrington again put to sea, he found himself at the head of a combined fleet of fifty-six ships. The French had been even more energetic. They placed the chief naval command in the hands of the Count de Tourville, the most distinguished and skilful of all their naval officers ; and the force entrusted to him amounted to no less than eighty-four ships, many of them in size exceeding the very largest of our own. The two admirals came in sight of one another off Beachy Head on the 30th of June. Torrington at once saw that he was greatly out-numbered ; and he would probably have avoided an engagement, had not Mary, who, while the king was absent in Ireland, exercised the supreme authority in England, sent him positive orders to fight. She had received information, which she had good reason to believe, that James's adherents had organised a conspiracy for seizing herself and the chief ministers ; after which, De Tourville's fleet was to convey James to England, which, it was anticipated, would gladly avail itself of her captivity, and her husband's absence, to return to its old allegiance. Under the pressure of this peremptory command, Torrington advanced towards the enemy ; but it was not the spirit which other officers have often shown in similar situations, and which has led them to do their best to give effect to orders of which their judgment has disapproved. On the contrary, he moved so slowly and languidly, that it seemed as if he designed to throw the brunt of the battle on the Dutch division :



at all events, our allies sustained the chief portion of the conflict, and the chief portion of the loss ; the majority of our fleet, and among them Torrington's own ship, never fired a gun. Of those English ships that were engaged, the *Anne* was captured : the rest neither received nor inflicted much damage. But the Dutch lost six fine ships. The defeat of the combined fleets was undeniable ; and, had not De Tourville committed some errors of seamanship in the pursuit, which enabled the defeated squadron to outstrip him, it would, in all probability, have been most complete and most disastrous. Torrington resigned the command, and an investigation was made into his conduct. The council formally acquitted him of blame ; but he was never employed again.

Meanwhile Shovel, who had succeeded Rooke in the command of the squadron in the Irish seas, conducted his operations with great activity and talent, and greatly contributed to the success of the campaign against James's adherents. With his ships alone he took Duncannon Castle, which commanded the entrance to the harbour of Waterford ; and he drove a French squadron from Limerick, a success which greatly added to the difficulties under which James's general, Sarsfield, who was defending that city with great resolution, was beginning to labour. Admiral Russell succeeded Torrington in the chief naval command, and with Killigrew, Delaval, Ashby, and Rooke, for his subordinate colleagues, cruised up and down the Channel to protect our merchantmen, and to intimidate the French from attempting to send any reinforcements to Ireland. Including a Dutch squadron of twenty-eight vessels, the force under Russell's command amounted to eighty-five ships of the line, besides frigates and fire-ships. At the same time De Tourville was hovering about the entrance to the Channel with a fleet but little inferior in numbers to that of Russell, and superior to it in the condition of the ships,

the calibre of the guns, and the strength of the crews. The changes which had been recently introduced into the system of shipbuilding had chiefly taken the direction of increasing the size of the vessels; and the flag-ships in each fleet, the *Royal William* and *Le Soleil Royal*, now mounted one hundred guns: an armament that, with the single exception of the *Sovereign of the Seas*, no vessel had ever yet carried; but which, in the course of the next few years, was occasionally raised to one hundred and ten. And then, so general and so firm was the belief that we had reached the greatest bulk consistent with the effective handling of the ship, that it was not till the present century that we launched any vessel of a greater armament. Yet in spite of the magnitude of these fleets, and the proximity in which they must have frequently been to each other, the year 1691 passed without any conflict taking place between them. And the only events calling for mention occurred in the West Indies. In that quarter our officers had been very energetic and successful; and had reaped triumphs, the fruit of which we still enjoy. Captain Wright recovered St. Kitts from the French; and Sir William Phipps reduced Port Royal, in Nova Scotia, and the adjacent settlements which they had founded in that province. He even projected an attack upon Canada; which seems to have failed more from undue caution on the part of General Whalley, the commander of the land forces, and from the condition of the troops, who were attacked by a general and dangerous epidemic, than from any defect in his original plan. While Captain Wren, who was cruising with a squadron of seven vessels off Barbadoes, though he made no captures, gained great fame from his repulse of a French fleet of eighteen ships, which fell upon him as he was convoying a body of merchantmen of great value between Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands.

But, if the year 1691 had been barren of important re-

sults, the next year was, on the contrary, distinguished by the most important engagement of the whole war. Russell's fleet was in splendid order, but reports were very general that many of the officers were wavering in their attachment to the late Revolution, and were beginning to listen to the promises which James's emissaries were industrious in lavishing among them. The rumour was not without foundation, for even Russell himself was deeply offended with William, and had certainly begun to open a negociation with his old sovereign. He had even made him distinct offers of service, on condition of his proclaiming an universal amnesty. At this critical moment Queen Mary wisely made an effort to reclaim the disloyal, by feigning a confidence which she was far from feeling; and she caused Lord Nottingham, the Secretary of State, to write Russell a letter, stating that she had heard rumours of the disaffection of some of her sailors, but that she was so far from believing them, that she attributed them to the malignant cunning of the enemies of her husband's government. The officers were flattered by her apparent confidence, and drew up an address to her expressive of their constant fidelity. They were sincerely and unalterably fixed in it by a declaration which James issued a day or two afterwards, as if in reply to Russell's entreaty for an amnesty; in which, while he promised forgiveness to the general body of his subjects, he denounced punishment, without hope of mercy, against the leading adherents of William: including in the black list, not only such men as Marlborough and Ormond, but men of peace like Caermarthen and Nottingham; and even prelates of the church, such as Burnet and Tillotson. Against the latter the only offence to be alleged was that he had accepted the archbishopric of Canterbury, which Sancroft had vacated by refusing the oath of allegiance to the new sovereign. Mary, with acute discernment, at once perceived how fatal James's relentless obstinacy must be to his cause;



she reprinted his declaration, and disseminated it as widely as possible. No measure of conciliation that William could have adopted could possibly have benefited him as did this obstinate and pointless tyranny of James. His staunchest adherents, and indeed the whole Jacobite party, were disappointed and offended by it. But none was so disappointed and offended as Russell: from henceforth he abjured all attachment to him, and resolved to be true to William; and he was soon in a position to give effect to his new resolution. The absence of any battle in the previous year had been commonly attributed not more to Russell's lukewarmness than to the fact of De Tourville having receiving orders from Louis not to fight while his fleet was in any respect inferior to that of the allies. But these orders were now recalled. Louis, not content with assisting James in Ireland, had planned an invasion of England itself; to cover it, he had considerably augmented his fleet, and had sent it to sea early in May, in the hope that the Dutch division would not have joined the English at so early a period of the year, and that, consequently, De Tourville would be fully able to cope with Russell. But that officer, as soon as he decided on the part he would take, had beaten up the Channel against adverse winds, had effected a junction with the Dutch, had called in his own out-lying divisions, and, by the middle of the month, had no less than ninety-nine ships under his orders. With this great force he was sailing slowly by Cape La Hogue, on the 19th of May, when he encountered De Tourville, whose numbers scarcely exceeded the half of his own. He at once made the signal for battle; and De Tourville, though completely taken by surprise by our overpowering numbers, conceived that his orders left him no discretion, but obliged him to fight. With this conviction he prepared for battle, with all the bravery of his nation. The battle began before midday, and it soon became apparent that, besides our great superiority in



numbers, we had another great advantage in the skill of our gunners, who fired much more rapidly than those of the enemy. De Tourville himself singled out Russell as the object of his own attack, and was joined in it by five more of his best ships, who all made a set at the Commander-in-chief, in the hope that, if they could disarm him, his followers might be discouraged. Russell, however, called up two of the nearest ships to his aid, and with these he so successfully repelled his assailants, that, after a combat of two hours, De Tourville found his ship completely crippled ; he was forced to retreat, and was towed out of the action by some of his comrades. His fleet, in general, fared no better than their admiral. Our officers had never shown more zealous courage ; it seemed as if their hereditary chivalry excited them to show themselves worthy of the confidence their Queen had expressed in them ; nor had they ever displayed greater skill and promptitude in manœuvring. Shovel was rear-admiral of the Red squadron, Rooke was vice-admiral of the Blue squadron ; and these two officers particularly distinguished themselves by the seamanship with which they gradually gained the weather-gage of the enemy, with the intention of cutting off his retreat. Had not a heavy fog come on early in the afternoon, in all probability they would have wholly succeeded ; but, under cover of the mist, the French slipped by us, and made for their own harbours. The fog continued till late the next morning, aiding the fugitives, of course, far more than the pursuers : but still several of the enemy from time to time fell into our hands. The pursuit continued the whole of the next day ; and when, on the morning of the 22nd, we had driven thirteen of them into La Hogue Bay, Rooke followed them in his boats, heading the attack in person, and destroyed the whole of that squadron. One division escaped uninjured, by running, in its despair, through the race of Alderney, where Sir John Ashby, to whose squadron the pursuit of

them had fallen, for want of pilots, did not dare to follow them. The victory, however, was sufficiently complete. Russell, in his despatch, gives the names of sixteen French vessels which were destroyed, including the two first-rates, *Le Soliel Royal* and *L'Ambitieux*, and one or two others were burnt, whose names he could not ascertain. And, lest the French should ascribe their defeat solely to their inferiority of number, he thought himself fairly entitled to point out that our superiority was only nominal, since of his three divisions, the greater part of the Blue squadron, and also of the Dutch, were prevented by the wind from joining in the battle, so that, in fact, the enemy "were beaten by a number considerably less than their own;" and beaten so completely that, "had the weather proved otherwise, he did not see how it was possible for any of them to have escaped us."

This triumph on a large scale was in some degree counterbalanced by losses on a small one: which, indeed, according to the opinion of some of our leading statesmen, partly grew out of it; for all the latter part of the summer the Channel and the Bay of Biscay swarmed with French privateers, which inflicted great injury on our commerce. And when the clamours of the merchants had compelled an inquiry into the management of our navy, which was naturally held accountable for the protection of our merchant shipping, the Board of Admiralty explained the disasters which it could not deny, by affirming that the circumstance of the French fleet having been driven into its harbours by the result of *La Hogue*, and not daring to put to sea again, had left the French seamen in want of employment, which they had found on board the privateers whose success was complained of; while our policy of concentrating all our exertions on keeping together one large fleet had both prevented our furnishing the merchants with sufficient convoys, and had also hindered them from being able to procure adequate crews for their vessels.

Party spirit and personal motives entered largely into this inquiry, as there had been great disputes between Russell, the ministry, and the Board of Admiralty concerning the opportunities which, as some alleged, the Admiral had thrown away, of completing the ruin of the French fleet in their own harbours. He showed, convincingly, that the stormy weather which came on immediately after his victory, coupled with the great strength of the fortresses which protected the harbours, had rendered the proposed attacks impracticable ; and finally the House of Commons passed a resolution warmly approving of the whole of his conduct. But, though this vote was undoubtedly well founded, his enemies had the greater influence over the King's mind, and induced William both to lay him aside and to neglect all the representations which he made to him.

The result was, that for some months our navy was much neglected, as if we thought that we could rest on our laurels already gained ; though it was no secret that Louis was straining every nerve to retrieve his disasters. Even the officers, by whom Russell had been replaced, and who were supposed to have obtained their employments by their reputation for a more complying temper, remonstrated with the Board of Admiralty at the total inadequacy of the fleet which was now sent out to the duties which were expected of it. It would have been well if this inadequacy had been demonstrated by argument alone ; unhappily, the remonstrance was soon corroborated by facts. The French ministry had used such diligence in recruiting their fleet, that, by the beginning of the spring of 1693, they had above a hundred ships ready for sea, which they placed under the command of De Tourville, whom they had the magnanimity and justice not to blame for their misfortune of the previous year. With this great force that admiral, who had accurate intelligence of our intended movements, sailed down to the Spanish coast, to lie in wait for a vast fleet of our merchantmen which he knew to be bound for



the Mediterranean. It is so rarely possible to keep operations on a large scale secret, that there seems no reason whatever for imputing treachery to any of those who shared the councils of the nation ; and we ourselves were equally well acquainted with the movements of De Tourville : but the disaster which ensued made every one eager to fix blame on some tangible quarter. Our merchants concerned in the trade to Smyrna and the Levant had been so long waiting for a convoy, that at last their vessels bound for those waters amounted to four hundred sail. Their value was in full proportion to their numbers ; and yet, though De Tourville was known to be watching to intercept them, a comparatively small squadron of three English ships and ten Dutchmen and Hamburgers, many of them of the lowest rating, was all that was given to Sir George Rooke to protect them on their destination.

De Tourville had been for some time lying in Lagos Bay, or cruising about the adjacent headlands, when the first ships of the English fleet appeared in sight. He at once prepared to attack it ; but wishing to give Rooke no alarm till the whole of our ships were too far advanced to retreat, he first sent out a small squadron, which, as soon as we had caught sight of it, retreated again, leaving one or two small vessels to fall into Rooke's hands, and delude him with the false idea that the only French force at hand was one weaker than his own, and, like his own, encumbered with the care of convoying a large body of trading-vessels. Rooke hesitating, and yielding to the opinion of others, advanced, in the hope of reaching Cadiz, where, since we were at peace with Spain, his whole fleet might enjoy a safe refuge ; but the next morning, the 16th June, he discovered his error and his danger. De Tourville, with his whole fleet, the three-deckers alone outnumbering the ships of war of the allies, was in his front, at a distance of scarcely four miles. To give battle to a force so overpowering would have been the attempt



of a madman. In this terrible emergency the British Admiral displayed rare presence of mind and skill. He bade the merchantmen spread themselves as widely as they could, keeping himself between them and the French, and bearing off imperceptibly to the westward. He was in some degree assisted by the indecision of De Tourville himself, who seemed bewildered by the magnitude and variety of his prey, while the French captains lost their time in picking up stragglers instead of falling at once on the main body. From one cause or another the greater portion escaped capture; some got safe into Cadiz; some turned their heads northward, and reached the Irish harbours. Rooke, himself, with the English ships of war and one large division of merchantmen, effected a retreat to Madeira, and from thence made a circuit home. The whole number of the vessels taken and destroyed by the enemy did not exceed one hundred, including some of the Dutch and Hamburgh men-of-war. Still the value of these was enormous; and the discredit of the mismanagement which allowed the French to be enriched by so precious a success was worse even than the loss. Some of the stragglers were subsequently discovered by De Tourville in the Spanish ports, Cadiz, Gibraltar, and Malaga, which he would not allow to protect them; but forced his way into the harbours, and intimidated the Spanish governors by his threats, while he burnt some, sunk others, and captured more. The entire damage inflicted by him was estimated at above a million and a half of money. The only success which we met with during the whole year to counterbalance this heavy loss, was in the bombardment of St. Malo by Captain Benbow, an officer who afterwards rose to high professional distinction. St. Malo was particularly obnoxious to us, as being the chief nursery of the privateers which infested the channel. And, in November, Benbow with twelve men of war and four bomb-vessels entered the harbour; demolished the principal fort; de-

stroyed what ships he found there, and returned home without having experienced the loss of a single man.

Rooke had rather added to than impaired his reputation by the result of his meeting with De Tourville. Nevertheless, the events of the year determined William to replace Russell at the head of his fleet, which, including a strong Dutch squadron, amounted to ninety-three ships of the line, besides frigates and fireships. With such a force Russell, at the beginning of 1694, assumed the offensive in the most active manner. He himself, with the main body, repaired to the Mediterranean, hoping to encounter De Tourville in person, to retaliate upon him the injuries which he had inflicted on us in the preceding year; and he detached two powerful squadrons, one under Lord Berkeley and the other under Sir Cloudesley Shovel, to carry the war into the enemy's own country, by attacking all their principal northern ports. The first attempt was made on Brest, and failed. The French had received intelligence of the design from many quarters; and their great engineer, Vauban, had strengthened the fortifications of that important arsenal with all the resources of his skill. To overpower the batteries which he had constructed was found impossible: the boats of the fleet did, indeed, land General Talmarsh, with eight hundred men, who attempted to take the defences in the rear; but the garrison was too strong for them. Talmarsh was killed, many of his men were taken prisoners, and Lord Berkeley had a hard task even to bring off (as he did) his ships in safety.\*

\* This is that expedition the failure of which Lord Macaulay imputes wholly to the treachery of Marlborough, in sending intelligence of the proposed expedition to James at St. Germain's. The French, however, had received minute information on the subject before Marlborough's letter arrived: indeed, it seems probable that the letter was designedly kept back by the writer till it was too late to be of use. Marlborough's object apparently being, not to defeat the expedition, but to take credit with James for wishing to defeat it, in the event, which, however improbable, he could not but look upon as possible, of that prince recovering his throne. In fact, William's own an-

This, however, was the only disaster we met with in the whole year. From Brest Lord Berkeley proceeded to Dieppe, which he burnt; then he bombarded Havre, destroying the greater part of that important town: while Sir Cloudesley Shovel, after an unsuccessful attempt to burn Dunkirk, which failed from some mismanagement of the fireships, made his way into Calais, and bombarded it with great effect; to the consternation of the citizens, who, in common with all the inhabitants of the northern coast, found that neither their fortifications nor the natural difficulties of the navigation of their coast could protect them from the spirit of enterprise which animated the whole of the British navy.

Meanwhile Russell himself had uninterrupted success. Before he quitted the Channel he was informed that a fleet of merchantmen, laden with every kind of French produce, and bound for India, was lying in Berthaume Bay. He immediately detached against it a small squadron under Captain Pritchard, in the *Monmouth*; who took or destroyed thirty-five sail, with a frigate and two sloops, which were attending them as their escort: a few days later a second detachment captured seventeen more; and, flushed with this auspicious commencement of his expedition, the British Admiral proceeded on his way to the Mediterranean. Off Lisbon he picked up Admiral Neville and the Dutch Admiral, Evertz, with their squadrons, which raised his entire force to sixty-three sail of the line, besides smaller vessels; and, thinking himself now strong enough to cope with any force which the enemy could bring against him, he passed the Straits of Gibraltar, and advanced up the Catalonian coast to aid in the defence of Barcelona, which the French were

nouncement of an intention to attempt a descent on the French coast, which he made to his parliament in November, 1692, was quite enough to put Louis on his guard; and Vauban's mission to Brest took place some months before Marlborough's letter was written;



besieging by land and sea. It was the end of July when he reached that city, which had been on the very point of surrendering, but now saw itself delivered beyond its utmost hopes. De Tourville, unable to contend against such a force as Russell's, withdrew to Toulon, and left the British Admiral at leisure to send small detachments in different directions to harass the French trade. One squadron, consisting of the *Plymouth*, a 60-gun ship, and five frigates, under Captain Killigrew, particularly distinguished itself; fighting a gallant action with two French ships of the line, the *Content*, of seventy guns, and the *Trident*, of sixty, and capturing both of them. The *Plymouth* was the first to come up with them, and for above an hour she bore the whole brunt of the engagement single-handed. Killigrew himself was killed, and the *Plymouth* was nearly disabled; but she had thus given time for the frigates to come up, and, though the Frenchmen made a gallant defence, protracting a running fight throughout the night and a portion of the following day, they were at last forced to surrender. Russell continued at sea till the end of the following year, 1695: not being able, indeed, to force De Tourville to quit Toulon to fight him, but entirely preventing him from attempting anything against the Spaniards; and greatly lowering the reputation of the French, and exalting our own among all the nations, Christian or barbarian, who dwell on the shores of the Mediterranean.

In the autumn of 1695, we again renewed our attacks on the northern coast of France, burning St. Malo a second time, and afterwards Granville; and a second time failing to injure Dunkirk, which, though it was regarded with great jealousy by the Dutch, to please whom chiefly the attempt was made, they themselves were at last obliged to confess to be impregnable. And this confession, on our part, of the strength of that great port induced Louis, in the spring of 1696, to assemble a large fleet there, under the command of Jean du Bart, an officer whose genius for



naval operations has never been exceeded among his countrymen ; and a powerful army, which, under the protection of the fleet, was to cross over to England, and to be commanded by James himself.

James expected to be joined on his landing by a large body of adherents ; some of whom had always been faithful to him, while still more had been disgusted by the reserved manners of William and his undisguised and impolitic partiality for his Dutch followers. So great, however, was the dread of Russell entertained by the French, that the whole scheme was disconcerted by his appearance in the Channel. He had returned to England at the approach of winter ; but the moment that intelligence of this projected invasion reached the ministry at home, he had put to sea with every ship in the kingdom that was fit for service ; and Louis had nothing to do but to recall his troops, to lay up his largest vessels in ordinary, and to comfort James as best he might.

During the short remainder of this war, no exploits worthy of any very particular commemoration signalized the navy of either country. Du Bart did, indeed, elude the vigilance of Benbow, who was blockading Dunkirk, and escaped from that port with a squadron, which, though small, was well equipped, and formidable from the talents of its leader ; but the Dutch, and not ourselves, were his object. Another French squadron, under an officer named De Pointis, sailed to the West Indies to attack the Spanish settlements among those islands ; but the British Admiral, Neville, being sent after him with a sufficient squadron to watch his operations, prevented him from doing any harm, and De Pointis returned to France without having executed a single design that he had proposed to himself in his expedition.

The year 1697 saw the war terminated by the peace of Ryswic. The disposition of the two monarchs, the restless, insatiable ambition of Louis, nourished as it was

by vanity, bigotry, and personal hatred of William ; and the vigilant jealous temper of William, proud of his shrewdness in detecting the intrigues and designs of the French King, and mistakenly fancying his own military talent equal to his political genius, from the very first convinced every statesman of discernment that it was a truce, rather than a peace that had been agreed upon. And even had both princes been more desirous of peace than either of them in reality was, the events which took place in the next few years must have overpowered their most pacific inclinations.

For a moment, however, it seemed likely that our next enemy would be our late ally the King of Spain. The numerous colonies belonging to that nation and to ourselves in the West Indies, naturally led to continual jealousies and bickerings. And on one or two occasions the Spanish governors of their different settlements had been persuaded to deeds of violence against our merchants ; seizing our ships and imprisoning the crews. To remedy these evils, the ministry in 1698 sent Benbow with a sufficient squadron into those regions ; who, by his unhesitating decision and firmness, compelled the restitution of the ships that had been seized, and obtained assurances that there should be no repetition of such conduct.

Another expedition, also unconnected with our relations with France, was sent to the Baltic. William had entered into an alliance with Charles XII. of Sweden ; and, as that Prince was still very young, and had given no indication of his fondness and genius for war, Peter, the Czar of Russia, had stirred up the kings of Denmark and Poland to invade his territories, intending that they should be dismembered and divided amongst the three allies. Charles sought the assistance of England ; and, though Parliament was not sitting, William gave it without hesitation. It was the year 1700 ; and the moment

that the return of spring had rendered the Baltic navigable, Sir George Rooke was sent with a powerful fleet of English and Dutch ships against Copenhagen: William justly considering that the power of Denmark to annoy Sweden so far exceeded that of Russia or of Poland, that a blow struck against that kingdom would dissolve the confederacy: and so it proved. The Danes, who had received early intelligence of Rooke's expedition, had made all the preparation in their power to receive him. They had collected a fleet of twenty-eight sail of the line, little more than half his numbers; but they trusted to the strength of the forts by which the ships could be supported, and also to the extreme intricacy and difficulty of navigation around their islands. More than once, since that day, they have relied on these auxiliaries; but they have always found them insufficient to delay the advance of a British seaman. They tried also to amuse Rooke with negociations; (similar attempts have been made since, with no better success); but, in spite of batteries, and shoals, and diplomatic artifices, Rooke pushed steadily on. Presently Charles himself arrived to combine his operations with our fleet: crossing the narrow channel, and landing near Elsineur with five thousand men. Rooke mercifully abstained from exerting the power at his disposal, justly thinking the Danes sufficiently alarmed to agree to his terms. His anticipations were correct: menaced by land and sea, they speedily submitted to the conditions which they had previously rejected. In August a treaty of peace was signed, which left Charles at full liberty to turn his arms against his other enemies, and Rooke returned home.

## CHAPTER VII.

1701—1704.

James dies—Louis recognises the old Pretender—William dies—Anne declares war against France—Lord Caermarthen—Prince George of Denmark—Rooke fails in an attempt on Cadiz—Destroys the galleons in Vigo Bay—Leake's success in the West Indies—Benbow's battle and death—Dilkes takes a fleet of French merchantmen—The great storm—Rooke is disappointed at Barcelona—Takes Gibraltar—The battle of Malaga.

BUT no employment in any other quarter ever diverted William from the great object of his life, that of permanently humbling the ambition of Louis; and during these years of peace he more than once impressed on his parliament the necessity of being constantly prepared for a renewal of the war. The people, however, were fully sensible of the blessings of peace, and his admonitions had but little effect till the autumn of 1701, when James died at St. Germain's, and Louis, forgetting that at Ryswic he had recognised William as King of Great Britain, now formally acknowledged James's son in that capacity, and received him at his court with royal honours. This most impolitic as well as fruitless act at once united all parties in England. The whole people looked on it as an insult to themselves as well as to their king, and as made more foul by its ingratitude; since William had displayed the most rigid good faith towards Louis in the promptitude with which, on the death of Charles, he had acknowledged the Duke of Anjou as King of Spain. They therefore now began to prepare for war with as much alacrity as William himself could desire. Alliances were formed with all the powers which had most reason to complain of, or



to fear, France ; and war was on the point of being proclaimed when, in March 1702, William died.

It was, however, at once made apparent that the change of sovereigns in England made no difference in her politics. Anne's advisers were as fully convinced of the duty of bridling the ambition of France as William had been ; and, in the very week after her accession, Anne sent the Earl of Marlborough to Holland to assure the States of her determination to adhere to the alliances which her predecessor had formed, and to the line of policy which he had laid down. Nor was this announcement a mere unmeaning profession. At the beginning of May, war was formally declared against France by England, Holland, and Germany ; and, while Marlborough was sent to command the army in the Netherlands, Rooke was placed at the head of the fleet. Before the declaration of war, and indeed throughout the winter, occasional and desultory acts of hostility had been committed by the ships of the now hostile powers against one another ; one of which is worth recording for the singular view the English officer, Lord Caermarthen, took of the relations in which it had placed the Frenchman and himself to one another. He was in command of a frigate, when, entering the harbour of Rotterdam, he found there a French vessel of a slightly inferior force. He at once fired into her, and summoned her to surrender, and she obeyed : he subsequently released her, but before he did so he brought in a bill to her captain of twelve shillings, as the price of the powder and shot he had expended in firing upon him ; and compelled him to pay it before he set him or his ship at liberty.

Now, however, the war was not to be carried on by single vessels, nor on one sea only. The Queen had given a pledge of the interest she took in the navy by appointing her husband, Prince George of Denmark, to the office of Lord High-Admiral. Anne, no doubt, meant the appoint-

ment to be a compliment to her seamen, and as such they received it; but it cannot be said that the navy derived any great benefit from his superintendence. In fact, he was a heavy indolent man, with no talent for either war or statesmanship, or even for those ordinary details which are called business. His uncle, Charles II., had declared of him that he had tried him drunk and had tried him sober; and neither drunk nor sober had he anything in him. Fortunately the real officers of the fleet were of a very different material. There were still Rooke, Shovel, and Benbow, who had distinguished themselves in the late reign; and to them were now to be added Sir John Leake, Sir Thomas Dilkes, and others well calculated to keep up the reputation of the British navy, and even constantly to augment it by their own achievements. Nevertheless the first enterprise which was undertaken by Rooke failed, in spite of the greatness of the preparations made for it by the ministers, and of the great expectations of the people in general, whom those preparations had raised to a high degree of enthusiasm. No fewer than fifty ships of the line, thirty English and twenty Dutch were placed under his command. To this imposing force was added an army of fourteen thousand men under the Duke of Ormond; and the object of the expedition was Cadiz, which the ministers at home expected to prove an easy prey, not so much from the comparative inferiority of its defences to the power of the armament about to be directed against it, as because a large party of the citizens was understood to be ready to welcome the assailants as friends of the rival pretender to the Spanish throne, the Archduke Charles. In both respects these anticipations were falsified by the event. Cadiz was found to be more strongly fortified than ever, and abundantly garrisoned; while the firmness of the governor deterred the disaffected citizens, if indeed there were any such, from making any demonstration in favour of the hostile force, or of the

cause which it espoused. Ormond did indeed effect a landing, and make himself master of one or two forts, but the sandy character of the country prevented him from bringing up his guns near enough to the stronger and more important castles to make any impression on them ; and he was glad to re-embark without any material loss.

Yet it so happened that this disappointment led the British fleet to a success greater perhaps than could have resulted from the attainment of its original object. Vexed at his own disappointment, and at that of his countrymen at home, which he was aware they were not unlikely to visit upon himself, Rooke was hesitating whither to go, or what enterprise to undertake, when intelligence was brought to him by Captain Hardy, of the *Pembroke*, that a large fleet of galleons from the West Indies, with a powerful escort under the command of the veteran Chateau Renault, was lying in Vigo Bay. The British Admiral eagerly caught at the prospect of effacing the recollection of the failure of the attempt in Cadiz, and at once sailed with his whole force for that harbour. He found Hardy's information correct, and the prey which lay before his eyes sufficiently tempting ; but to gain possession of it was no easy task, even for him and his hardy followers. The galleons were there, fifteen huge vessels laden with the richest treasures of the still teeming West ; but they were under the escort of eighteen ships of the line and seven frigates. Forts and batteries on land, armed with seventy guns of heavy calibre, commanded every approach ; a large boom, laid down and held in its place by every device of engineering art, stretched across the whole harbour, while, even should the boom be broken, the water over the shoals in front of the bay was in general so shallow, and the channel of entrance was so narrow, that it was plain that the largest of our ships must be kept back, and that the intended attack must be entrusted to the third-rates, the frigates, and the fireships.



These did not amount to above twenty-five ships, of which ten were Dutch ; yet, with this inadequate force, Rooke ventured to attack an enemy infinitely superior in number of men and weight of metal, even if the guns and garrisons of the forts on land were excluded from the computation. He shifted his flag into the Somerset, of 80 guns, Vice-Admiral Hopson removed into the Torbay, of the same force ; and these two vessels gallantly led the way. The Torbay broke the boom, and, the passage being thus cleared, the whole squadron entered the harbour. While this was doing by sea Ormond, who with twenty-five hundred men had effected a landing a few miles to the southward, stormed the principal fort which commanded the entrance, and, by making himself master of it, removed the greatest impediment to the success of the fleet ; though for a short time he was himself the greatest hindrance to it, since, till the fort had fallen, it fired over the heads of his men at our ships, and nearly destroyed the Barfleur, which could not venture to return the fire for fear of injuring the soldiers. Still the assailed ships, though deprived of this support, made a gallant resistance ; and, as they also had several fireships attached to them, their efforts were very near meeting with success. The Torbay lost a hundred and fifteen men, and was entirely disabled for the day by the explosion of one fireship, and others of our ships had great difficulty in beating off similar assailants in the narrow space to which the contest was confined ; nor did they do so without sustaining serious injuries in their masts and rigging. However, our gunners had long established their superiority to those of every other nation ; and that superiority was never more fully displayed or more effective than now. Our loss of life was not great : we lost no ship : while we took or destroyed every vessel of every kind which the harbour contained. Fifteen French and three Spanish ships of the line, seven French frigates, and fifteen Spanish galleons were burnt or captured ; the



booty was enormous. Much treasure, indeed, had been landed from the galleons before Rooke arrived, but a great quantity remained on board; and the lowest computation did not fix its value at less than two millions of our money. The commercial loss fell most heavily on the Spaniards; but their war-fleet suffered less than the French, which can scarcely be said to have recovered the injuries it received on this great day before the end of the war.

Four days after the battle, Shovel arrived with a reinforcement for our fleet, and Rooke, leaving him to repair and bring off the prizes, returned to England; whither Sir Cloudesley soon followed him, bringing home the captured ships in safety, and having augmented their number by one or two valuable prizes that he made on his way. Our successes of this autumn were not confined to the Spanish coast. In the West Indies, Captain, afterwards Sir John Leake, swept the seas with a small but active squadron, making prizes of very many merchantmen, and destroying the ports and settlements of the French in Newfoundland; while in our own Channel, though the French Admiral de Pontis had a fine fleet in Dunkirk Harbour, he was so vigilantly blockaded by Captain Beaumont, with an inferior squadron, that he was unable to put to sea the whole summer. The only drawback to our triumphs of this year occurred in another portion of the district in which Leake had been so successful. In the autumn of 1701 Benbow had been sent to the Antilles, where it was known that the French Admiral Du Casse was also cruising. Benbow was a resolute and skilful officer, but a man of a somewhat rough and stern temper, which had excited a feeling of insubordination and hostility against him in the breasts of some of his officers. Though peace still subsisted when he quitted England, his instructions were warlike; and he had acted on them, making prizes of several Spanish ships, and in

no respect keeping secret his intention to treat the French in the same manner, if opportunity should offer. In the spring of 1702 certain information reached him that the French were preparing greatly to increase their force in the neighbourhood; and at the beginning of August he learnt that Du Casse, with four ships of the line, and one large frigate, was off Carthagena, making arrangements with the Spaniards to cripple our trade in that quarter. His own force consisted of two ships of the line, one ship of fifty-four guns, and four large frigates. With these he at once sailed in quest of the Frenchman; and, on the 19th of August, he found him proceeding under easy sail, at no great distance from the South American shore. Benbow at once made the signal for battle, but, as the French squadron, though not positively fleeing from the combat, held on its course, without taking any measures to bring it on, little was done that evening beyond exchanging one or two broadsides. The next five days are amongst the most discreditable in our naval history. During the night of the 19th, Benbow, in his own ship, the *Breda* of seventy guns, had kept as close to the enemy as the darkness would allow; and so correct had been his judgment of their course, that at daybreak, on the 20th, he found himself close to them; but of all his squadron, only one frigate, the *Ruby*, Captain George Walton (on such a day of cowardice, or treachery, or both, his name deserves honourable mention), was at hand to support him; the rest had already contrived to drop several miles astern. Still, as the enemy continued on their way, Benbow, with this single comrade, pursued them as vigorously as he could, firing whenever they seemed within gunshot, and signalling with peremptory orders to the rest of the ships to join him. The next day, the French, seeing his almost isolated state, halted to fight. The *Ruby* behaved most gallantly, and engaged one of the ships of the line, but was soon disabled by her

antagonist's heavier fire, and might have been taken, had it not been for the resolute manner in which the *Breda* first supported, and then protected her. While this conflict was proceeding, the *Defiance*, 64, Captain Kirby, was unable to avoid coming close to the enemy, but she refused to fire a single shot. The *Windsor*, 48, Captain Constable, behaved equally ill; and the next day, the *Greenwich*, 54, Captain Wade, behaved even worse, keeping five leagues from the Admiral, who, from the crippled state of the *Ruby*, was in greater need of support than ever. On the 23rd Benbow engaged the whole of the enemy's ships single-handed; he even took a small vessel, called the *Anne*, a British galley, which Du Casse had captured on his way out. At last, Captain Vincent of the *Falmouth*, 48, began to feel something like shame at the part which he had been enacting, and came to his assistance. The next day, Benbow, now supported by the *Falmouth*, was still continuing the fight with unabated resolution, when a chain-shot struck him on the leg. In spite of all the agony of this mortal wound (for such it proved to be), his spirit was as resolute as ever. He was borne below, but he soon ordered himself to be again carried on deck, where he still gave his orders with an unaltered countenance. "I am sorry, sir," said Fogg, his captain, "to see you in this state." "I am sorry, too," said the brave old man; "but I would rather have lost both my legs than have seen this disgrace brought on the British flag." Presently he was addressed in a different spirit. Captain Kirby had the audacity to come on board the *Breda*, and tell him, "that he had better desist; the French were very strong, and, from what had passed, he might see that he could make nothing of it." In truth he could make nothing of it: he had indeed reduced the ship with which he had been most closely engaged, to a wreck; but he had not escaped severe injury to his own masts and rigging.



The whole French squadron was now in full flight, and he soon became convinced of the impossibility of keeping up any further pursuit of them with the slightest prospect of success. He returned to Jamaica, while Du Casse made his way to Carthagera, thankful for his escape, and well aware to what circumstances he owed it. He was too thorough a seaman to conceal his sentiments ; and, on his arrival in port, he despatched a letter to Benbow, telling him that he had had but little hope to have been saved from supping in his cabin ; and thanking God, who had ordered it otherwise. “ As for those cowardly captains who had deserted their admiral, he earnestly recommended him to hang them up, for they deserved it.”

At the beginning of November Benbow died of his wound ; but, before that event, he had time to order a court-martial to be held on those who had thus disgraced themselves. The evidence brought out the Admiral's dauntless courage, and the dastardly cowardice of the accused officers, in the strongest light. It was proved that three times Benbow had boarded Du Casse's flagship in person, though he had been driven back to his own vessel by superior numbers ; and that he had received two severe wounds, before that which deprived him of his leg ; while Kirby, who had been the chief instigator of the other captains, had not only abstained from taking any part in the battle, but had even threatened some of his officers with personal violence for repeating the orders expressed by the Admiral's signals. One captain, Hudson, of the *Pendennis*, died before he could be brought to trial ; the others were all convicted. Kirby and Wade were shot. Constable was cashiered, and sentenced to be imprisoned during the Queen's pleasure. Vincent was sentenced to be suspended ; but was ultimately pardoned, in consideration of his tardy repentance.

The next year, 1703, is marked by no event of importance ; what advantage was gained by either country



was wholly ours. The most conspicuous exploit was that of Admiral Dilkes, who, being off Jersey with a squadron of three ships of the line and three frigates, captured an entire fleet of forty-three French merchantmen, with three ships of war that were their escort. On the Spanish station Shovel completely protected our own shipping, as Commodore Walker did in the West Indies; and the French, disheartened by the destruction which, in the preceding year, Rooke had dealt among them in Vigo Bay, had no large fleet at sea. The only encounters that took place were some between single ships, whether belonging to the regular navies of the two countries, or privateers; in all of which the fortune of England prevailed, and the hostile vessels became in every instance the prize of our own. But, though we could conquer the French and Spaniards, we found a foe mightier than ourselves in the elements; and before the year had closed it was rendered memorable by a great calamity. On the 26th of November, the southern counties were visited by a violent storm, such as there had been no record of for nearly half a century. The Eddystone Lighthouse was swept away so completely that not one stone remained on another. In London the tide rose so high that the water was many feet deep in Westminster Hall: and the whole river was almost choked up with wrecks. On the squadron in the Downs the gale fell with terrible fury: thirteen ships were lost; some of them with the whole of their crews. Shovel himself, with some of the fleet that had lately returned from the Mediterranean, was in the most imminent danger; for this time, by great resolution and presence of mind, he saved himself at the expense of his masts, but, as we shall see hereafter, he was destined eventually to meet the fate which he now escaped. His second in command, Sir Stafford Fairborne, likewise escaped, but only by running before the gale, which bore him into the Baltic; and he had long been given up for lost, when he returned in the spring of the

succeeding year. So portentous did the calamity seem, that a general fast was ordered, in token of the humiliation and mourning of the nation in general; and it was observed with a solemnity which reminded old men of the day when a similar ordinance had expressed the universal prostration of the people before the irresistible ravages of the Great Plague.

The next year, 1704, was, in its warlike operations, by sea as well as by land, of a very different character. Louis had, with great diligence, repaired the losses his fleet had suffered at Vigo; and at the same time, having learnt a lesson from the events of the past year, when one of his fleets had been blockaded in his northern ports by an inferior squadron, while (as has also just been related) a most valuable assemblage of merchantmen had been captured in the Channel by another small force, he resolved for the future to concentrate his efforts; and to make the Mediterranean, and the waters just outside its barriers, the field of action for his principal fleet. He calculated that in that sea it would be close to his own harbour of Toulon, or to the friendly ports of Spain; while we, if we came thither in pursuit of it, should be far removed from any shelter, whether from a superior force, or from storms; should have no place of refuge in which we could either avoid disaster, or repair damages. Nor did it escape his notice that if we, on our side, should, by his show of force in the Mediterranean, be induced to direct our attention to the object of counterbalancing it there, we should, by so doing, leave the Atlantic and the West Indies more open for the exploits of flying squadrons or single privateers.

His schemes for his flying squadrons had no inconsiderable success: the objects which he proposed to himself by the employment of his principal fleet in the Mediterranean, not only failed at the moment, but led immediately to the infliction of losses on his allies, which to this day they have never recovered.

Rooke had again been appointed to the chief command in our fleet. He could not divine the intentions of Louis ; but, knowing that he had a splendid fleet at Toulon, and also that a formidable squadron was fitting out at Brest, he thought his own first object ought to be to prevent their junction. And with that view, in the middle of February, he sailed for the Tagus, with Rear-Admiral Dilkes for his second in command, a rank which that officer retained till the arrival of Sir C. Shovel later in the year. For above two months the fleet lay inactive in that river, the only exception to this inactivity being the success of Dilkes, who, cruising about with a detached squadron, took some valuable prizes. But, at the beginning of May, Rooke, in pursuance of fresh orders which had lately reached him, entered the Mediterranean, and proceeded up the Catalonian coast to Barcelona, in the hope that the appearance of an English fleet there would induce the citizens to renounce Philip, and to declare for the rival claimant to the throne, Charles of Austria. This expectation the Admiral soon discovered to be wholly mistaken ; and, to avoid wasting time, he determined to go up the Mediterranean, in search of the Toulon fleet. Failing to find it, he quitted that sea, and, passing the straits, went towards Lisbon to meet Shovel, who, as he learnt from despatches which he had received from home, was on his way to join him with a splendid squadron of picked ships. He met him in the middle of June ; and, after one or two more ineffectual attempts to perform some exploit which might seem worthy of the splendid force under his orders, he held a council of war, at which it was decided to attack Gibraltar. It was an audacious and a hazardous undertaking. We have seen that, nearly half a century before, Blake, even when at the head of the splendid fleet which he afterwards led to victory at Santa Cruz, looked on Gibraltar as impregnable ; and what had deterred Blake, others might well shrink from. Impregnable to any at-



tack conducted according to the rules of art, to the methodical operations of a regular siege, that great fortress certainly was. Nature had made it almost inaccessible; and, though the Spaniards had never seriously expected it to be attacked, engineering science had been called in to exhaust its resources in making the most of and augmenting its natural strength. The only hope was, that, by making its garrison careless, that very strength might prove its weakness, and render it liable to a sudden and well-executed surprise.

Accordingly the resolution to attack it was no sooner taken than it was put in execution. The council was held on the 17th of July, and on the 21st the whole fleet rode into the bay. The force under Rooke's command, English and Dutch, now numbered above sixty vessels, and they had on board eighteen hundred marines. These, under the command of the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, were instantly disembarked on the narrow neck of land which joins the fortress to the continent; and having thus cut off the communications of the garrison, the Prince at once summoned them to surrender. No Spaniard was ever at a loss for big words, and the governor, Don Diego de Salinas, replied that he would bury himself and his garrison under the ruins before he would surrender a post entrusted to him by his sovereign. By his resolute language and confident bearing, he thus hoped to conceal from his assailants what he could not disguise from himself, the fact that the force at his disposal was utterly inadequate to the defence of the place. The demands which the war in the interior had made upon the military resources of King Philip had been so great, that, trusting in the presumed inaccessibility of Gibraltar, he had reduced its garrison to a number scarcely sufficient to supply the necessary reliefs, and wholly unable to sustain a siege for a single day. Rooke, however, had no suspicion of such a state of things, and made all his preparations on the supposition that the



works of the fortress were fully manned. The wind was so unfavourable that the whole of the next day was consumed in getting the ships into their proper positions ; but at last that was effected with such skill and success that every gun in the fleet was brought to bear on some point or other of the fortifications. On the 23rd, at day-break, the Admiral began the most furious cannonade that at that time had ever been seen in the world. In five hours fifteen thousand shot were poured on the works, whose extent was such that few entirely missed their mark. Unable to stand so tremendous a fire, the garrison was at last seen to evacuate the batteries on the South Molehead. They were the key of the fortress, and Rooke instantly ordered out the boats to take possession of them. His orders were obeyed, and almost anticipated by the eagerness with which Captain Hicks of the Yarmouth, Captain Jumper of the *Lenox*, and Captain Whitaker of the *Nottingham*, rowed ashore and seized them. Those who first landed, though they did not suspect it, were leading a forlorn hope. The whole place was mined, and when the retreating Spaniards fired the train, above a hundred men were killed and wounded ; but, unappalled by the havoc, their comrades pressed on. Presently Whitaker stormed a strong redoubt between the mole and the town, thus hemming in the garrison on both sides ; Rooke sent in a second summons, and the governor surrendered. The honours of war were granted to him and his soldiers ; and Rooke, almost amazed at his own success, hoisted the British colours on the Rock of Gibraltar.

Even if we make full allowance for the scantiness of the garrison, it was still a most astonishing conquest. When the conquerors had taken possession of it, and had leisure to examine the fortifications, they could scarcely believe that any force could have been sufficient to reduce a place protected by such a combination of natural and artificial strength. The narrowness of the approaches, the steepness

of the precipitous rock, the numerous and vast batteries of heavy guns commanding every accessible point, seemed to bid defiance even to the greatest superiority of numbers. In Rooke's own language, it seemed as if fifty men might have defended those works against thousands.\* And that resolute men can indeed hold it against the most enormous force Englishmen, since his time, have amply proved, as we shall have occasion to relate in a subsequent chapter. Party spirit, which was never more bitter nor more unscrupulous than at this time, and which led the rival admirers of Rooke and Marlborough to fancy that due justice could not be done to their respective favourites, without disparaging the other, prevented the captors of Gibraltar from being greeted with the honours they deserved at the time ; but posterity does them justice, and classes their exploit among the most heroic achievements that embellish the history of the nation. The importance and value of the acquisition thus made also failed at the time to obtain a full recognition. More than once in the next fifty or sixty years, it was spoken of by our statesmen as hardly worth retaining ; nay, more than once it was almost on the point of being restored to its original and more natural possessors. But, taught perhaps in some degree by the eagerness which the Spaniards have at all times shown to recover it, we have gradually arrived at a more correct notion of its importance to British interests as the key of the Mediterranean. As such we have learnt to look upon the possession of it as indispensable to the maintenance of our naval pre-eminence in that sea ; and statesmen of all parties now agree in esteeming it as one of the choicest of the foreign jewels which encircle England's crown : never to be parted with, never to have its safety compromised by any considerations of policy or economy.

So splendid a triumph naturally stimulated the British

\* See Rooke's despatch quoted by Campbell.

Admiral to greater exertions. It also excited the French to endeavour to lessen or efface its lustre by gaining some advantage over the very fleet which had made this glorious acquisition ; and circumstances held out a hope to them that they might be able to do so. It was soon known that, almost immediately after the fall of Gibraltar, the greater part of the Dutch squadron had returned home ; and a son of Louis himself, the Count de Toulouse, the High-Admiral of France, who had lately taken the command of the Toulon fleet, thought that its withdrawal furnished him with an opportunity for turning the tables on Rooke. Indeed, the force which was now sailing under his flag was such as to warrant the most confident anticipations of success. It consisted of fifty\* ships of the line, seventeen of which were three-deckers ; with seventeen frigates and fireships ; and twenty-five smaller vessels. With this splendid fleet he advanced towards Gibraltar ; but when he came in sight of the conqueror of that fortress, his heart failed him ; and, though he would not condescend to a movement of open flight, he fell back, hoping to gain a friendly port without a battle. He had been slightly deceived by the report of the withdrawal of the Dutch division. Some, indeed, had already gone, but twelve good ships were still with Rooke ; and the whole amount

\* There is some dispute with respect to the numbers of the hostile fleets at Malaga. Lord Mahon (' War of Succession') says that according to the French accounts they were forty-nine and forty-seven. Sismondi states them at forty-seven and forty-five. It is certain, however, that we had fifty-three ships, and that we were greatly outnumbered. I have followed Charnock (iii. 8), who gives the names of all the French ships of the line and frigates ; and (42-45), those of the English ships. In the account of the result, too, I have followed the same authority. Lord Mahon follows Sismondi in saying that no ship was either taken or sunk on either side. But Charnock gives the names (pp. 10, 19) of the five French ships mentioned in the text, as known or believed to have been sunk ; and it seems reasonable to place greater trust in his statement, rendered definite as it is by the very names of the vessels said to be destroyed, than in the mere vague assertions of historians who evidently looked on the action as one of minor importance.



of the allied fleet of every rate was not less than fifty-three: a number scarcely more than equal, indeed, to Toulouse's ships of the line; but still sufficient to make any enemy pause before he provoked an encounter with it. Toulouse retreated. But Rooke had seen him, and, without a thought of his own numerical inferiority, at once pursued him; and, on the 13th of August came up with him off Malaga, which had already been the scene of more than one daring exploit of our seamen, and was now about to be made more memorable than ever. When he found himself overtaken, the French Admiral had too high a spirit to decline the battle to which he was invited. Rooke weakened his line by detaching two or three ships to windward to counteract any manœuvres which his antagonist might endeavour to put in practice. But, when thus brought to bay, Toulouse relied too much on his strength to attempt them; and though the wind was light, what there was was too unfavourable to allow us to practise any. It became therefore a combat of plain hard fighting, and our superiority in gunnery was soon seen to be more than sufficient to counterbalance the enemy's superiority of number. The battle began about ten, and continued till nightfall. By two o'clock we had gained a decided advantage, having beaten back their leading squadron, and destroyed one of their three-deckers, *Le Fier*, of eighty-eight guns, with more than one of her comrades. Still they continued the conflict till night; when, under cover of the darkness they retreated: and though, the next day Rooke endeavoured to renew the engagement, Toulouse, aided by a fair wind, baffled all his efforts to overtake him, and returned to Toulon.

It was characteristic of the French system, then and since so perseveringly pursued, of endeavouring to impose on themselves and on Europe, that they now claimed the victory in this action; Louis even ordering *Te Deum* to be celebrated in *Notre Dame*, to express his thanks to



the Giver of all Victories for his success. Yet, in spite of his superiority of numbers, he could not pretend to have taken one British ship; nor could he deny that, besides the *Fier*, the *Excellent*, 62, the *Fortune*, 58, the *Esperance*, 50, and the *Cheval-Marin*, 44, had all been either sunk in the battle, or so utterly disabled that they went down immediately afterwards. It is quite certain that they never again reached a French harbour, and equally undeniable that, during the remainder of his reign, Louis never sent out a single naval expedition on a large scale; thus by his subsequent inactivity, practically confessing a defeat, where in words he claimed a triumph. To have given him such a check, with a force so inferior, was in itself a great achievement. But full justice will not be done to the gallantry and skill of Rooke, Shovel, and their worthy subalterns, if we omit to take into our consideration the inferiority of the instruments with which they had to work. In his able and important work on marine architecture, Charnock has pointed out that now, and for many years subsequent to this period, the French vessels were infinitely superior to ours in every point of sailing; corroborating his argument by the remarkable fact, that in almost every instance in which a British ship was captured and adopted into the enemy's service, it was soon retaken, in consequence of being outsailed and left behind by its new comrades. According to this judicious critic and skilful architect, it was not till the time of Lord Anson that our builders had the sagacity to adopt the principles which had long reigned in the French dockyards; and to put our seamen, in respect of the excellence of their vessels, on that equality with their enemies which their intrepidity, their skill, and their devotion to their country so well deserved.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1704—1712.

Endeavours of the Spaniards to recover Gibraltar — Leake defeats them twice — Rooke is superseded — Dies — Capture of Barcelona — Leake takes Alicante, Iviça, and Majorca — Sir Stafford Fairborne takes Ostend — The French takes Nevis — The battle of Almanza — Shovel attacks Toulon; fails through the misconduct of the Allies — Shovel is wrecked off Scilly — War policy of Louis — Underdown's success at Newfoundland — Leake takes Sardinia and Minorca — Lord Dursley in the Channel — He defeats Duguai Trouin — Captain Riddell's action — Death of Prince George — Fall of Alicante — Conferences of Gertruydenburg — Norris takes Cette — The French recover it — Our successes in the West Indies — Capture of Port Royal — Failure of design on Canada — Peace of Utrecht.

IF we were slow to recognise the value of the acquisition of Gibraltar, the Spaniards instantly felt the importance of its loss : and, as the force which could at first be spared from our ships was not sufficient to garrison it, they entertained hopes of recovering it before it should be put in a state to resist an attack. They were further encouraged by the knowledge that Rooke had returned to England shortly after the battle of Malaga. He had, however, left Sir John Leake as commander off that station, and that officer proved fully equal to the emergency. The Prince of Hesse had been appointed the first British governor of the fortress he had contributed to win ; and at the end of September he received intelligence of the attack which was being prepared against him. He at once transmitted the news, with a request for immediate assistance, to Leake, who was at that time with his fleet at Lisbon. Without a moment's delay Leake sailed to his aid, with every ship that could be spared ; reinforced his garrison with a sufficient body of marines, gunners, and

engineers, and then withdrew again to Lisbon on the appearance of a French fleet, too strong for him at the moment to resist. Before the end of the month he returned with his whole force, and found the place in the most imminent danger. Thirteen French ships, under the command of De Pointis, were blockading it by sea; three thousand Spaniards, led by the Marquis of Villadarias, were preparing to assault it by land; but Leake's arrival changed the face of affairs. Those ships, that were not too far in the bay to escape, retreated; but he took four frigates, three or four smaller vessels, and, amongst them, one laden with ammunition and combustibles; and landed a sufficient number of men from his ships to enable the garrison to resist any attack that could be made before the troops, which were daily expected, should arrive from England. At the beginning of December four regiments arrived, and then Leake once more returned to Lisbon, having baffled all the attempts of the enemy, and, indeed, having added considerably to the damage which Rooke had inflicted on them in the early part of the season.

He repeated his achievement, under very similar circumstances, at the beginning of the following year, when the enemy renewed the siege of the fortress with a greater force. De Pointis was still retained in command of the fleet: Villadarias had been replaced by Mareschal de Tesse, who, though not more brave nor more able, yet, as a Frenchman, enjoyed more of the confidence of Louis; and everything indicated that nothing was to be left undone that might ensure a success in which the Allies considered both the welfare and honour of Spain to be so greatly interested. But during the winter Sir Thomas Dilkes, with a well-appointed squadron, had joined Leake; and that officer, on receiving a fresh despatch from the Prince of Hesse, again repaired to his assistance. His second success was more decisive even than his first. As he arrived in sight of Gibraltar he discovered a squadron

of five sail of the line off Europa Point, and took or destroyed the whole of them : he had nearly captured De Pointis himself, but that officer ran his ship, *Le Magnanime*, 74, on shore, a little inside the Straits, and, though his vessel was wrecked and burnt by her own crew, he himself escaped. All hope of a successful attack on the fortress by sea was now abandoned ; and though De Tesse did for a while make a show of maintaining a blockade on the side of the land, such a demonstration was so wholly ineffective, while we, being masters of the sea, could throw in supplies and reinforcements without hindrance, that he soon desisted from his undertaking, and withdrew to a district where he might hope to be more serviceable to his own master.

It may almost be said that it was more than we deserved, to have such a body of able admirals as we now had ; for faction had obtained such sway in our parliament and in the council of the Queen that Rooke, after having performed the greatest services to his country, was forced to resign his command, and was employed no more. He himself, and his political friends, were not wholly free from blame, since they were inclined to be equally unjust to Marlborough, and, had they had equal influence, they would not improbably have treated him as his party now treated Rooke. Deprived of all naval employment, he devoted the remaining years of his life to the discharge of his political duties in the House of Commons, where, for several sessions, he had been member for Portsmouth, and died four years afterwards of the gout, at the age of fifty-eight. We have recorded some of the most eminent of his exploits : it would be unjust to his memory to leave unmentioned that characteristic of his career of which he himself, shortly before his death, spoke with the greatest satisfaction ; one which, if we consider the almost universal corruption of his age, may perhaps be thought as de-



serving of praise as the most splendid of his warlike actions. He was known to be leaving behind him but a small fortune, and when one of his friends expressed to him his surprise at its scanty amount for one who had held such high commands, and had inflicted such losses on the enemy, he replied, "It is true, that I leave but little behind me, but what I have has been honestly earned; it never cost a sailor a tear nor the nation a farthing."

In his place the ministers raised Shovel to the chief command; and he, who had often displayed conspicuous skill under the orders of others, now showed himself equally fit for the supreme authority. His achievements, indeed, were less splendid than those of Rooke; but it must be remembered that he was the gleaner after his predecessor had reaped the harvest, and the French were now too thoroughly convinced of our superiority at sea to afford him the chance of distinguishing himself by any decisive victory. Yet he made some opportunities for himself, and, by the prudence of his general arrangements, he enabled those of his officers who were in command of detached squadrons to perform many brilliant actions. His first care on reaching Lisbon, at the end of the spring of 1705, was so to post his squadrons, as to prevent the fleets in Toulon and Brest from uniting; the consequence was that neither dared to venture out. Our merchantmen reached our ports in safety, while considerable numbers of the French traders fell into our hands. The only exception to our success was a disaster which befel our Baltic fleet. The Count of St. Paul was one of the most enterprising of Du Bart's successors; and in October, while commanding a squadron of five sail of the line, and nine or ten smaller vessels, he fell in with a fleet of merchantmen coming from the North under the protection of three frigates. He took twelve of the traders, and all the frigates, which, however, made a stout resistance. He himself was killed in the action, and Louis paid but a deserved tribute to his skill and courage, when

he declared that he would willingly restore the prizes to recover the brave man who had taken them.

Though the French would not leave their harbours to fight him, Shovel was determined not to let the summer pass by without striking a blow somewhere ; and accordingly he gladly listened to the entreaty of the Archduke Charles, to join Lord Peterborough in an attempt to reduce Barcelona. Peterborough himself, indeed, was joined with him in command of the fleet whenever he might choose to embark in it ; but, except in one instance for a single day, he never exercised his power, wisely confining himself to the species of warfare which he understood, and in which his brilliant and peculiar genius enabled him to reap the most dazzling and decisive advantages. Barcelona was one of the most strongly fortified places on the Spanish coast, but against two such commanders there was little hope for the garrison. With bold originality, instead of making the reduction of the city precede that of the citadel, Montjuich, which commanded it, Peterborough first captured the citadel, and thus rendered the city untenable : it was taken after a brief siege of three weeks ; and its capture had such influence on the whole province of Catalonia, that, before the winter, it acknowledged Charles as King of Spain. After this success Shovel returned home : leaving the command to Leake, who cruised up and down the coast between Cadiz and Vigo the whole winter ; being indeed disappointed in his hope of intercepting the galleons from South America, but greatly harassing the enemy's trade, and preventing them from undertaking anything against our own mercantile fleets. At the return of spring he, too, was called to Barcelona by as urgent entreaties of Charles as had before been addressed to Shovel. Philip had been greatly chagrined at the loss of so important a city ; and Louis, who thought his honour concerned in maintaining his grandson on the Spanish throne, was eager and resolved to recover it. With this

object DeTesse marched against it with fourteen thousand men, while the Count of Toulouse, who still commanded the Toulon fleet, received orders to put to sea at all hazards, and blockade it on the side of the sea. Had the operations of the fleet and army been carried out according to the original plan, the city must have fallen before any relief could reach it. But fortunately the delays of the Spanish regiments which were to form the chief part of the army, and the blunders of some of the engineers, delayed the commencement of the operations; and, though the Count of Toulouse obeyed his orders, keeping up a heavy fire on the place for some days, and furnishing De Tesse with vast magazines of supplies and ammunition, but little real progress had been made when Leake arrived from Lisbon, at the head of a fleet so powerful that the French Admiral at once retreated before it, and returned to Toulon. And De Tesse, sensible that without the co-operation of the fleet he could effect nothing, precipitately raised the siege, leaving behind him his whole train of artillery, and all the stores of food and ammunition which he had collected, and which the Count had brought him.

The preservation of a town, however important, is not so striking an achievement as the acquisition of one; and accordingly Leake, eager for renown, quickly turned his attention to the reduction of such places as might be serviceable to his country's ally, King Charles. Sending Sir John Jennings with a squadron to take possession of Carthage, which, as he heard, was inclined to espouse the cause of that prince, he moved himself with the main body of the fleet against Alicante, one of the most strongly fortified towns on the whole coast. Its governor was far from sharing the political views of the Governor of Carthage; and made so vigorous a resistance that Jennings rejoined his admiral while the siege was still in progress. His arrival decided the contest; and as soon as the place had fallen, Leake quitted the mainland to make an attempt

on the Balearic Isles. It was known that the Spaniards, while they had a strong garrison in Minorca, had left the other islands, Majorca and Iviça, but slightly defended. And Leake conceived the idea that, if he could reduce the two latter, the more important island of Minorca might become involved in their fate. He had very little trouble in making himself master of Iviça, where the inhabitants, indeed, were disposed to prefer Charles to Philip for their sovereign; and of Majorca, where, though the governor was attached to Philip, the citizens rose against him, and compelled him to submit. But, while making these conquests, the Admiral also learnt that Minorca was too strong for him to attempt its conquest with any prospect of success; and he therefore returned to England for the winter, having, if he had not made any positive acquisitions for his own sovereign, at least greatly augmented the renown and influence of his country, by proving that, in spite of their distance from her harbours, her fleets were too powerful for the states on the borders of the Mediterranean, even when united, to resist.

It was late in the autumn before Shovel himself sailed towards the Mediterranean; and, though he remained on the Spanish coast till the spring of 1707, he was not able to effect anything that could serve the failing cause of the Austrian prince. Unfortunately for our views the brunt of the war at this moment was falling, not on Lord Peterborough, a man of military genius second only to that of Marlborough himself, but on Lord Galway, who, though personally brave, was wholly unequal to the burden. In April, 1707, the Duke of Berwick gave him a defeat at Almanza, which, in effect, determined the contest between the rival princes. The decisive character of this victory was perhaps hardly ascertained at first, but it was clear that all the efforts of Charles's partisans must thenceforth be directed to the centre of the peninsula rather than to the coast; and Shovel, seeing that he could



be of no more use there, began to turn his attention to projects calculated to distress the French in their own persons instead of through their allies. The Duke of Savoy, the elder brother of Marlborough's illustrious colleague, Prince Eugène, had, in concert with Lord Peterborough, projected an attack on Toulon; and Sir Cloudesley, being asked for the co-operation of his fleet, entered warmly into the design, and, on learning the result of the battle of Almanza, at once moved towards that important harbour. His force consisted of forty-three ships of war and a large number of transports. The Allies were disappointed in the extent of the co-operation from the Emperor on which they had reckoned, as that sovereign permitted himself to be deluded by a project for the subjugation of Naples, and, in the pursuit of that object, which proved entirely chimerical, suffered one large division of his army, which had been originally destined for the attack on Toulon, to be transferred to the centre of Italy. The design, however, of destroying the only arsenal which the French possessed was too important, and, in the judgment of the commanders (notwithstanding this disappointment), its success was still too probable for the Allies to renounce the attempt to execute it, and Eugène himself, with the rest of the Imperial army, arrived to assist in the enterprise. By a sudden onset the Duke's army, aided by the boats of the English fleet, forced the French works at the mouth of the Var, and secured a passage across that river. Shovel then proceeded along the coast to Toulon, arriving in front of it on the 15th of July. And the very next day he began to bombard the town, in spite of a powerful fleet which lay in the harbour, and which outnumbered our own; but which was at this time so disheartened by our manifest superiority that it took actually no part in the defence of the place. The British Admiral conducted his own operations with untiring vigour; his ceaseless fire destroyed

eight of the French ships of the line, made large breaches in the walls, and burnt a great portion of the town. But the conduct of the generals was very different: the Duke of Savoy, though personally brave, had not the professional skill nor the energy of his brother; and Eugène himself was on this occasion shackled by the orders of the Court of Vienna, which had forbidden him to risk his troops too much in an enterprise the main fruits of which seemed, to their narrow policy, likely to be more advantageous to their allies than to themselves. The brothers differed widely, and almost quarrelled about the details of the operations to be adopted. Shovel exerted himself to the utmost to reconcile them, and to bring them to work in harmony; and from his own ship supplied them both with everything that they required, guns, ammunition, and even a body of seamen. But all his exertions were fruitless. Much valuable time had been wasted in marching from the Var to Toulon; and every moment had been skilfully employed by the French, who, from the first moment that the object of the Allies began to unfold itself, displayed the greatest activity in strengthening the landward defences of the town. The Marshal de Tesse was sent down to command; the garrison was raised to six thousand men; and three strongly intrenched camps were formed in the neighbourhood. At last, on the 4th of August, the French found themselves strong enough to attack the besiegers' works, making a fierce sally, which entirely succeeded. Many of the duke's batteries were destroyed. Some of his guns were even carried off into the town as trophies; and he was so dismayed that he instantly resolved to raise the siege. The only service which the fleet was now called upon to perform was to aid in the retreat of the army, first by attracting the whole attention of the French Marshal to itself by a renewal of the bombardment, which for a few hours was carried on, with as great effect as ever; and secondly, when the soldiers had by this means been enabled to quit their

position without interruption, by coasting along the shore as far as the frontier stream of the Var; thus commanding the line of march by which the Duke was retreating, and by which alone the Marshal could pursue.

With a bitter feeling of disappointment in his heart, Sir Cloudesley, leaving Sir Thomas Dilkes with thirteen ships, to watch the enemy in the Mediterranean, set out to return home with the rest of the fleet. The failure at Toulon was a mortifying close for a splendid career; but it proved to be the close of his. The fleet had fair weather for their voyage, and, on the 23rd of October, the lofty rocks of the Land's End were already visible from the masthead of the leading ships, when the Association, the flagship, was suddenly seen to be making signals of danger; and, almost in a moment, she went down. She had struck on one of the reefs on the outskirts of the Scilly Isles. The Eagle, Captain Handcock, and the Romney, Captain Coney (who, though a young officer, had already distinguished himself in a most brilliant manner by the capture of several French vessels), were so close to the Association, that they shared her fate. Sir George Byng, in the Royal Anne, was with difficulty saved by his own presence of mind and the admirable discipline of his crew. The St. George, Lord Dursley, after she had actually struck, was borne off the rocks again by the next wave, without receiving much damage. To what circumstance the disaster was owing was never clearly ascertained. Rumour suggested that the crew of the Association had got drunk for joy at the sight of land. It is certain that there must have been gross neglect somewhere; but, every one who could have thrown any light upon the occurrence being lost, nothing could be positively affirmed. Whoever was in fault paid for his error with his life; but that reflection was but a poor consolation for the loss of noble ships, veteran crews, and one of the most gallant officers who ever raised himself from a lowly station to the highest rank in his profession by his own exertions and victories.



The next day the corpse of the Admiral was thrown up on the sands of St. Mary's, where some fishermen found it, stripped and buried it; but a ring, which formed part of their booty, being subsequently recognised as having belonged to Sir Cloudesley, led to the identification of his body, which by the Queen's command was brought to London, and re-interred in Westminster Abbey.

It is probable that, when Louis XIV. proposed to attract the attention of our principal fleet to the Mediterranean, he did not foresee how entirely it would obtain the mastery there, or how greatly it would impair his influence in the countries which border on that sea, and in Europe generally; but in one respect his policy for a short time met with the success which he desired, since, in the West Indies, his fleet so far outnumbered ours that the British Admiral, Wheatstone, though a skilful and brave officer, could not prevent it from ravaging St. Christopher's, and from taking Nevis. And nearer home, though Sir Stafford Fairborne gained great credit by a successful assault upon Ostend, which he took in spite of all the efforts of its garrison of picked French and Spanish troops; yet the Channel in general was left exposed to the French privateers and small squadrons, which, issuing forth from the northern ports of France, stooped upon our merchantmen, who could rarely obtain a sufficient escort. One of the most successful of the leaders of these light squadrons was the Count de Forbin: on one occasion he took twenty-one merchantmen in the Downs, with two out of the three ships of the line which were convoying them. Soon afterwards he made a still greater number of prizes belonging to our Russian merchants. And, before the end of the year, having joined the Brest squadron, under M. Duguai Trouin, their combined force took the Cumberland, 80, the Devonshire, 80, and the Chester and Ruby, each of 50 guns; though they made so determined a resistance to a force three times as large as their own, that the whole of the



trading-vessels under their protection had time to escape. This success of the enemy caused such universal discontent among our merchants that they besieged the parliament with petitions reflecting upon the whole system of the management of the Admiralty. The House of Lords instituted a formal inquiry into the matter ; and, when the Lord High Admiral had put in an answer denying the truth of the greater part of the allegations of the merchants, and palliating others which could not be refuted, the committee ventured to declare to the Queen that the confidence which the Prince reposed in his officers was abused by some of them who had “presumed to lay such an answer before them in his name.” No formal censure was pronounced, nor was any admission of error made ; but the remonstrance was not without its effect, since it caused the Government to send powerful reinforcements to our American squadron, and produced increased diligence for the future in supplying escorts for our mercantile fleets ; though the greatness of our trade rendered it impossible for us wholly to escape loss. The disproportion existing between our trade and our colonial possessions, and those of the French, was then much slighter than it is now ; but the difference was already greatly in our favour ; and that circumstance manifestly rendered us more liable to such injuries than they were. Yet, in reality, if the whole ocean were taken into the calculation, the merchant-vessels captured by the British ships far exceeded in number those which became prizes to the enemy ; and especially was this the case on the other side of the Atlantic, where, during the remainder of the war, from the St. Lawrence to Darien our fleets had a mastery as decided as they had in the Mediterranean. In Newfoundland, Captain Underdown, with a small squadron of three ships, the Falkland, the Nonsuch, and the Medway, destroyed the fishing-establishments belonging to the French, capturing many of the vessels engaged in that trade, and making prize of, or

burning, five of the men-of-war employed on that station to protect it. Off the South American coast Commodore Wager was equally active and successful. Benbow's old opponent Du Casse was still in those seas with a squadron twice as strong as ours ; and, at the beginning of 1708, his principal object was to secure the safety of an unusually rich fleet of galleons which was expected to arrive at the Havannah from Portobello. But Wager intercepted them before they could join the French Admiral, and though they were five times as numerous as his own squadron, and were escorted by two French men-of-war, he destroyed one and captured another ; and would probably, indeed, have taken the greater part of the treasure-ships, had it not been for the misbehaviour of two of his captains, who were cashiered for their conduct.

The year 1708 was one of almost unmixed success for us, and discomfiture for our enemies. In our own channels, indeed, we acted only on the defensive ; but even there Sir George Byng wholly baffled a new project of Louis, who, since Marlborough was carrying everything before him on the Continent, thought it might be possible to compel our Government to recall him for its own protection, by landing the Pretender with a French army on the Scottish coast. Accordingly a fine squadron of eight ships of the line was placed under the command of M. de Fobin to carry twelve thousand men to Edinburgh ; but Byng pursued them with such vigour that, though they reached the Firth of Forth, they dared not even attempt to land the troops, but returned to Dunkirk, not only without having effected anything, but having lost one of their number, the *Salisbury*, which they had formerly taken from us, but which, being a heavy sailer, could not keep up with the rapidity of the flight of her new comrades, and was now retaken. But in the south we adopted a bolder line of conduct. Leake was commander-in-chief on the Mediterranean station, which extended outside the straits as far as Lisbon ; for a while,

he remained off the Tagus to secure the safety of some large companies of our own merchantmen; having met them and escorted them past the Spanish harbours, he quitted the Atlantic and entered the Mediterranean, where he fell in with a great fleet of vessels laden with supplies for the French army in the Peninsula, of which he took sixty-nine out of ninety. Then, having left the Archduke Charles a strong squadron to aid in the defence of Barcelona, since that important city was threatened with an attack, with the main body of his fleet he sailed against Sardinia, which the Marquis of Jamaica was occupying as governor for King Philip. Cagliari was the only strongly fortified place in the island; and Leake, landing a body of eighteen hundred troops whom he had on board under the command of General Wills, prepared to invest it by land and sea. But, before the soldiers were ready to commence their operations, he directed so terrific a bombardment against it from his ships, that the Marquis surrendered, and signed a capitulation for the whole island, of which Leake took possession in the name of King Charles. To that prince it was an acquisition of the highest importance, from the excellence and situation of the harbour of Cagliari; since, while that town and Toulon belonged to governments so closely connected as those of Louis and Philip, they in effect commanded the whole of the eastern waters of the Mediterranean, and threw great difficulties in the way of the continued maintenance of our fleet even in the western portion, which was of vital consequence to him while prosecuting his claim to the Spanish throne. Yet, valuable as Sardinia thus was, it was not the most important of the conquests which Leake made in this eventful year. The moment Cagliari had fallen he retraced his steps, and combined with General Stanhope in a well-devised attack upon Port Mahon, the chief city of the long-coveted island of Minorca. Its reduction had been pressed upon Stanhope by no less a person than



Marlborough himself, who, too great to feel any jealousy of the rival service, urged upon him that, with respect to the Spanish branch of the war nothing could be done effectually without the fleet; and who looked on the possession of that harbour as almost indispensable to the continued efficiency of our naval force in that quarter. It did not, however, prove so easy a prey as Cagliari. The British force arrived in front of it the first week in September; and it was not till a month had been passed in continual bombardments, frequent assaults of the besiegers, and repeated sallies of the besieged, that the garrison, which still amounted to a thousand men, surrendered on condition of being conveyed in safety and honour to their native country.

While the siege of Port Mahon was going on, another division of our fleet had reduced Fort Fornelle on the other side of the island; and the fall of these two places was quickly followed by the reduction of Citadella, the principal town on the western side. The conquest of these three towns was, in effect, the conquest of the whole island; and Stanhope, with a statesmanlike appreciation of its value, in which the ministry at home coincided, took possession of it in the Queen's name, and garrisoned Port Mahon with British troops. With the exception of a short interval, which will be mentioned hereafter, it continued to belong to us till 1782, when it was recovered by the French and Spaniards, and finally ceded by us at the peace of the ensuing year; till which time it counterbalanced Toulon, and, with Gibraltar, secured us the mastery of the Mediterranean; and we should bitterly have rued its loss had it not at the beginning of the century been compensated by the acquisition of Malta, whose harbour of La Valetta affords us equal advantages, with the addition of greater impregnability than any fortifications could bestow on Minorca.

Leake returned home full of honours, leaving Sir Edward Whitaker in temporary command of the Mediterra-



nean squadron. Whitaker had already distinguished himself at the time of the capture of Gibraltar, and at all times displayed great energy and skill in his profession ; but the French were now so completely dispirited by our manifest superiority, that they gave him no opportunity of earning additional renown at their expense. In our own waters Lord Dursley displayed equal ability, and met with similar disappointment. While he commanded in the Channel, so unremitting were his exertions, and so sound his judgment, that no disaster whatever befell our mercantile marine. In vain were our traders watched for and pursued by De Forbin and Duguai Trouin. Wherever they appeared, and Louis never had officers of more untiring vigilance and enterprise, there also was Lord Dursley watching and pursuing them in his turn ; and allowing them no opportunity whatever of striking even a single blow at our trade. But whenever he attempted to continue the pursuit, so as to bring the enemy to action, he had the mortification to find himself outsailed at every point ; his ships were not only slow but foul, (copper for the bottoms of ships had not yet been introduced, and a very few months' employment sufficed greatly to impair the speed of the best built vessel) ; and the French, who did not keep the sea so long nor so steadily as we did, but who continually returned to their own harbours, surpassed us in the cleanness, as well as in the original construction of their vessels. He had somewhat better success the next year, when some of his detached squadrons did succeed in capturing three or four French privateers and a small body of merchantmen. But the exploit which exhibits in the most brilliant light his energy and tactical skill, was his encounter with Duguai Trouin. In the dusk of a February evening in 1709, that most indefatigable officer, with a fleet of eleven sail of the line, first fell in with the British Admiral off the Scilly Isles. As Lord Dursley had but four ships under his orders, he was glad enough to avail himself of the

darkness to change his course, and to return to his own harbours. He did not then know with whom he had so nearly been in contact; but at Plymouth he heard that it was Duguai Trouin, who a day or two afterwards had fallen in with a large fleet of our merchantmen, under the convoy of Captain Tollet of the *Assurance*, 70, and four other ships. The extraordinary courage and skill of Captain Tollet had defeated his attempt to make any impression on the men-of-war, but had been unable to prevent him from capturing four or five of the traders. This intelligence made Dursley still more eager to measure swords with so persevering a foe. In the middle of March he again put to sea in pursuit of him, and, having learnt that he was still cruising about to the west of the Scilly Isles, he first convoyed a valuable fleet of merchantmen in safety beyond the limits of his beat, and then, returning, fell in with his intended antagonist on the 9th of April. The Frenchman had now only three of his original squadron with him, and one English 50-gun ship, the *Bristol*, which he had captured the day before. Our admiral pursued him; retook the *Bristol*, and captured one of the Frenchmen, *La Gloire*, 44; but *L'Achille*, the flagship, though greatly damaged in the hull, escaped by her superior sailing. It was in vain to pursue her; so Lord Dursley returned to Plymouth to repair the damages which he himself had sustained. On his way home he captured three privateers, and was now deservedly accounted one of the most enterprising and most able seamen in the service.

The naval history of this year would not be complete, if we were to omit to mention a most gallant exploit of Captain Riddell, of the *Falmouth*, 50. With his single ship he was conducting home a squadron of valuable traders from North America, when, a little to the west of the Scilly Isles, which the French had now selected as their favourite cruising-ground, he fell in with four of their ships of the line; none smaller, and two considerably

larger than the Falmouth. With such a superiority of force they looked on the whole flotilla as an easy prey ; but, in the event, they found themselves unable to master a single vessel. The French Commodore, whose single ship mounted ten guns more than the Falmouth, tried to lay himself alongside of her, so as to overwhelm her with his heavier broadside ; but Riddell took up such a position across the Frenchman's bows as enabled him to rake her fore and aft, while receiving but little of her fire in return. The enemy then had recourse to boarding ; but, in spite of the superior numbers of his crew, he was several times driven back with far heavier loss than he inflicted. At last he was glad to leave the Falmouth, and direct his attention to the convoy ; but Riddell, though severely wounded, would not allow him a respite for that purpose. On the contrary, he pursued him, drove him and his squadron off, and conducted the whole flotilla under his charge in safety into Plymouth.

In the winter of 1708, Prince George of Denmark died. He was succeeded at the Admiralty by Lord Pembroke ; and the changes which, partly in consequence of that event, took place in the ministry, for a time strengthened the war party in England. Yet the encouragement derived from this circumstance rather embarrassed our admirals in the Mediterranean, by encouraging Charles to form a number of schemes, in all of which he expected their co-operation, while their variety rendered it impossible for any one fleet to aid the whole of them. At one time he desired our assistance to conquer Sicily ; at another he requested us to reduce those towns on the coast of Tuscany, which belonged to the Spanish Crown, and acknowledged his rival : presently he insisted on the presence of our whole force on the coasts of Catalonia and Valentia, where the enemy were assembling in such numbers as threatened to deprive him of the acquisitions which we had made for him in that quarter. It was



evident that this was the most statesmanlike plan of operations: not only because, since Spain was the heart of the whole contest, a slight blow struck against him there would more than counterbalance a far greater advantage gained at such distant points as Italy or Sicily; but also because it began to be known that the distress produced in France by the long continuance of the war, and the long series of defeats sustained by the French Generals in Germany and the Netherlands, had engendered such general discontent that Louis himself had yielded to it, and had offered to withdraw Philip from Spain as the price of peace. It was therefore of the greatest political consequence to prevent that prince from recovering his hold on any districts where it had been shaken off: and, as the most pressing danger appeared to be that of Alicante, the reduction of which has been lately mentioned, and which was now invested by a well-appointed army of twelve thousand men, Byng and Whitaker decided on sailing to its relief. But unhappily they came too late: the defence of the place had been entrusted to a British officer, Major-General Richards, who in the discharge of this duty displayed a resolution that has never been surpassed; but whose means were wholly inadequate to resist the vast train of artillery, and the various appliances of engineering science, which the besiegers had brought against the devoted town. By a long duration of unfavourable weather our fleet was prevented from arriving till the 5th of April; and, twelve days before that time, the fate of the place had been sealed by the explosion of one of the largest mines ever constructed. The outer town had soon been laid in ruins by the heavy fire directed against it, but the garrison had retired into the castle, which had always been esteemed one of the strongest fortresses in the country. It was built on a solid rock, accessible only by a single causeway, which connected it with the town; and of



a height sufficient to be liable to but little injury from even the heaviest artillery. So impregnable, indeed, did the castle appear to any ordinary engines of assault, that, after mature deliberation, the commander of the besieging force, General d'Asfeldt, resolved on endeavouring to blow up castle and rock together by a mine. The solidity and hardness of the rock rendered such an undertaking one of almost unprecedented labour: it occupied the whole body of his engineers for three months; but at last it was completed, and filled with fifteen hundred barrels of gunpowder. D'Asfeldt was a generous enemy: he was capable of appreciating and respecting the courage of even a hostile garrison, and desired to save them from the destruction which it was now in his power to inflict; he wished also to preserve so strong a citadel uninjured, for his own master. And, with these views, he informed Richards of the extent of his preparations, and of the hopelessness of further resistance: offering him leave to send officers of his own to verify the statement thus made to him. Accordingly two British officers were sent to inspect the mine, who fully confirmed the representations of the French General; but even then Richards conceived that the interest of King Charles forbade him to surrender the place; and after giving him three days for consideration, D'Asfeldt ordered the mine to be exploded. It shook the whole rock like a mighty earthquake, filled up the cisterns which the besiegers had made with a toil almost equal to that which had been expended in the mine, and opened vast chasms, in which wholehouses with their inhabitants were swallowed up; but the castle, which stood on the highest point of the rock, though greatly injured, was not destroyed. Richards was killed, but Colonel D'Albon, who succeeded to the command, held out, and was still holding out, when our admirals arrived.

By this time, however, all hope of protracting the

defence to any successful result was abandoned, and all that Byng could do was confined to bringing off the garrison in safety and honour, leaving the castle which had been the scene of their heroism in such a state as rendered it but of small value to the conquerors who now took possession of it.

The remainder of the summer was spent by Byng in services useful rather than showy : in protecting our own flotillas of traders, capturing great numbers of the enemy's merchantmen, and by his vigilance disabling them from all attempts to retaliate. He even insulted them in their harbours of Toulon and Cadiz, by appearing in front of them in an attitude of defiance. And in the Channel Lord Dursley's operations were of a similar character, and equally successful: he made prizes not only of a great number of merchantmen, but also of several French cruisers and privateers. We have already related Wager's exploits in the West Indies ; and the only loss which we sustained as a drawback to all these successes, was that of the Gloucester, 60, which, with her comrade the Hampshire, in October, fell in with Duguai Trouin's whole squadron. The Hampshire, after a most gallant fight, escaped, though greatly crippled ; but the Gloucester was taken, and with this single prize the French Admiral returned to Brest, being able to boast, if not of any great triumph, at all events of being the only naval officer of his country who had escaped disaster.

During the remainder of the year 1709 the war languished by sea. And the first months of the next year seemed to hold out a promise of peace, which was not fated to be realised : the conferences of Gertruydenburg served only to show the utter insincerity of the French King, and when they were finally broken off, we resumed operations in the Mediterranean with greater vigour. Sir John Norris was appointed commander-in-chief on that station, and from the moment of his arrival, he displayed

great ability in counteracting the plans of the enemy, and also in assailing them on points where they did not suspect themselves to be vulnerable. His first exploit was to protect Sardinia, which the Duke de Tarsis, who commanded King Philip's fleet, had hoped to surprise before Norris could arrive. He had, indeed, reached the island first, and had sent into the bay of Terra Nuova a squadron which had landed a body of troops; but the British Admiral followed so closely on his steps that he captured the whole squadron and all the soldiers who had landed, and then pursued De Tarsis himself; driving him from place to place; compelling the Genoese, who, besides their possessions in the mainland, were at that time masters of Corsica, to refuse him supplies or shelter; and, though he failed to overtake him, effectually baffling all his projects of conquest.

He then turned his attention to offensive operations and, in compliance with a suggestion which he had received from the ministers at home, he proceeded against Cette. General Stanhope had approved of the design and had furnished him with a small body of soldiers to aid in the reduction of the town; the General and Admiral both believing that he would find friends among the inhabitants of the adjacent district, who were greatly discontented with the government of Louis. It is not improbable that this idea of the disposition of the people was correct, since neither the town nor the fort which protected it made more than a very feeble resistance. They surrendered to General Seissan, the officer in command of the troops, who took possession of them both, and of the neighbouring town of Agde; but his small force (it did not exceed seven hundred men), though large enough to win the post, was not large enough to hold it if attacked; and the Duke of Roquelaure, who at once marched against the invaders, with above four thousand men, had as little trouble in recovering it as we had had in taking it. Unshaken

by this disappointment, for which indeed the fleet was in no respect accountable, Norris sailed towards Hières, where he captured a fifty-gun ship, and destroyed some of the forts in the island of Port Croix ; then returning to Vado, he drove a French squadron off the coast, taking one of their number, threw a strong reinforcement into Barcelona, and, after these exploits, returned home.

No further enterprises or exploits of any importance signalised our navy in the Mediterranean during the remainder of the war. In the spring of 1711 the Emperor died, and Charles, who had so long been contending for the throne of Spain, was elected his successor. This event produced an entire change in the views of those who, like ourselves, had engaged in the war in order to prevent the possibility of the crowns of France and Spain being united in one individual. It was evident that the union of Spain and Germany under one sovereign would be at least equally dangerous to the balance of power. The English Ministry, too, had lately been changed : Harley and St. John had supplanted Lord Godolphin, and were resolved to make peace at any price ; in which desire Torcy, the French Secretary of State, cordially announced his agreement with them. The chief duty that devolved upon Sir John Jennings, who had succeeded Norris in his command, was to escort the new Emperor to Genoa.

But across the Atlantic the war, which was there carried on for British subjects solely, raged as fiercely as ever, and with general though not unmixed triumph for our sailors. In the North we had a fine squadron under Commodore Martin, which expelled the French from Port Royal in Nova Scotia, and took possession of the town and harbour, to which Martin gave the name of Annapolis in honour of the Queen. And, being by this acquisition secured from molestation by the French privateers, which had hitherto used it as their principal



place of resort, he proceeded against Newfoundland, where he completed the destruction of the French fishing-settlements; while cruisers detached from his squadron picked up many valuable prizes.

An expedition under Sir Hovenden Walker, having for its object the conquest of Canada, had worse success. It was well appointed, consisting of eleven fine ships and five thousand men; but, owing to some error in the reckoning, caused apparently by the uncertain character of the currents at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, several of the transports were lost; and at last Walker and his officers decided that the impossibility of procuring trustworthy pilots forbade them to persevere in their enterprise. To the southward Commodore Littleton succeeded in making prizes of some richly-laden galleons; as a set-off to which a great portion of our own Virginian fleet was taken by M. de Saus. But the most memorable exploit in these seas was one performed by Captain Bourn of the Newcastle, 50, who, with his single ship, beat off an entire flotilla of thirteen vessels (one of which had thirty-six guns, and another twenty-four), designed to attack our Leeward Isles: the almost entire absence of wind prevented him from capturing any, but he inflicted a heavy loss of men on them, and ensured the safety of those valuable islands.

The last event of the war was one which terminated it with no slight credit to our seamen. Sir Thomas Hardy, with a small but well equipped squadron of eight ships, had been engaged during the winter of 1711 and the spring of 1712 partly in blockading Dunkirk, and partly in capturing or driving out of the Channel the numerous privateers which were hovering about in the hope of preying on our traders. He had been disappointed in one attempt to catch M. Duguai Trouin; but still he cruised about with unabated vigilance, which was at last rewarded. In August he fell in with a well-laden

outward-bound squadron, scarcely inferior to his own in number or strength. It consisted of seven ships, the largest of which, like his own vessel, the Romney, mounted sixty guns. And a smart action ensued, which resulted in the capture of all the French ships but one. He had hardly brought his prizes into the Yarmouth Roads, when he received intelligence that an armistice had been signed, to afford leisure for the arrangement of a permanent peace. The negotiations lasted several months ; but in April, 1713, peace was finally concluded at Utrecht.

## CHAPTER IX.

1714—1745.

Death of Anne ; and of Louis XIV.—The rebellion of 1715—Norris leads a fleet against Sweden—The Czar invades Mecklenburg—Retires on a remonstrance from Norris—Projects of Alberoni—Spain reduces Sardinia—Sends an expedition against Sicily—The Spanish fleet is defeated by Admiral Byng—Peace is restored—Norris is sent again to the Baltic to curb the Czar—Sir C. Wager is sent to the Baltic—The Spaniards attempt to recover Gibraltar—Admiral Hosier's expedition and death—Death of George I.—The treaty of Seville—The feeling between us and the Spaniards—Captain Jenkins's story—War with Spain—Vernon takes Portobello—Fails in an attempt on Carthage, and on Cuba—His subsequent disgrace—Anson is sent against the Spanish settlements in the Pacific—His disasters—Sickness in his fleet—It is dispersed in a storm—He takes Paita—Reduces his squadron to one ship—Adventures at Tinian—Winters at Macao—Takes the Acapulco galleon—Returns home—Adventures of the Wager.

AFTER little more than a year of peace, Anne died ; yet the accession of not only a new individual, but a new dynasty, did not at first appear likely to endanger the continuance of tranquillity. The prospect of its duration was strengthened by the death of Louis, which took place only a few months after that of Anne. Almost at the very moment of his death, the adherents of the Pretender were commencing that frivolous and futile enterprise, known in History as the Rebellion of 1715, but though it was still from St. Germain's that that unfortunate Prince set out for the purpose of sharing in their enterprise, nevertheless he now obtained no great assistance from the French Government. By the expression of their good wishes, and secret but more useful gifts of money, both the old King and the new Regent alike showed their goodwill to his project ; but both likewise took equal care to be convicted of no overt act which might give us a pretext for reviving

a war in which their country had suffered such repeated and unparalleled humiliations. On the first outbreak of the revolt, our Government sent out two strong fleets to watch the French and Scottish coasts. Byng was commander in the Downs, Jennings in the North Sea ; and so unceasing was the vigilance of these two officers, that the Prince himself was unable to reach Scotland till above a month after the battle of Sheriff Muir had terminated the rebellion. Jennings even very nearly captured him on his return ; and he owed his escape, which was not effected without great personal danger, solely to the circumstance that the vessel in which he had embarked was so small, and drew so little water, that it could coast along where the British Admiral could not venture to follow him.

But though our war with France was for the present at an end, there seemed, at the very beginning of the new reign, a prospect of an early war with Sweden, which was in some degree a legacy from the government of the Queen. The Swedish throne was still filled by that most headstrong and quarrelsome of all sovereigns, Charles XII. ; whose whole reign had been spent in war with Russia, and who, being ever on the watch to quarrel with any Power which he deemed friendly to his rival Peter, now showed a disposition to attack us, on the plea that we had assisted the Czar with ammunition and supplies. The Swedish privateers, before the death of Queen Anne, had begun to seize our ships when they appeared in the Baltic, and to confiscate their cargoes : while our minister at Stockholm could not obtain the slightest redress for their owners, nor even the slightest explanation. Such arrogance could only be properly met by force ; and accordingly, in the summer of 1715, a powerful fleet of twenty sail was placed under the command of Sir John Norris, who at once proceeded to the Baltic. On his way he was joined by a Dutch squadron, and he further expected, on his arrival in the north, to unite his force to one



which Peter himself was preparing. The Danes also bore a part in the expedition, all the nations on the shores of the Baltic being eager to avenge themselves on the fierce warrior who had humbled them all; and soon a magnificent fleet of the four countries moved across the Baltic to Bornholm: the nominal command being vested in the Czar, but the real authority being, by the consent of all the confederates, entrusted to Norris. Even Charles XII., little as he was wont to calculate odds, was too prudent to risk an encounter with so overwhelming a force, and withdrew his own fleet to Carlsroon. There it was not possible to attack it with advantage, and the allies separated: though there seemed for a moment a chance of Norris's services being required against one of his recent comrades; when the Czar, whose thirst for territorial acquisitions towards the mouth of the Baltic was insatiable, poured an army into the Duchy of Mecklenburg, and began to utter violent threats against Denmark. These acts filled George I., in his character of Elector of Hanover, with the greatest alarm. Norris was commanded to address a strong remonstrance to Peter on the subject; and his language, when backed by the presence of his fleet, proved sufficiently powerful to procure the abandonment of the Czar's project, and the withdrawal of his army.

Before these transactions were thus terminated, the continuance of peace became still more endangered by events in the Mediterranean. Every power, indeed, whose interests led them into that sea professed to be desirous to preserve it; and loudest of all in such professions was the Cardinal Alberoni, the great minister of King Philip, whose enlightened and vigorous measures had already opened to Spain prospects of a revival of her former prosperity, and who was wont to affirm that he only required five years of unbroken peace to mature and consolidate it. Nevertheless, it was that statesman's conduct which now threatened to plunge Europe anew into war.

He was greatly annoyed at a treaty which we had recently made with France and Holland; and still more at a defensive alliance that we had concluded with the Emperor Charles, by which we had guaranteed to that monarch his Italian possessions. Perhaps, however, his discontent would have been confined to grumbling and remonstrance, had not the pride of the Spanish nation been suddenly exasperated by the seizure of Don Joseph Molines, who, on his return from an embassy to Rome, was arrested by the Emperor's officers and deprived of his papers, which were sent to Vienna for examination. In retaliation for this insult, Alberoni, though he issued no declaration of war against Charles, sent out an expedition against Sardinia, which speedily reduced that island. To avert war, now so manifestly impending, General Stanhope and the Abbé Dubois, who at that time were the leading ministers of England and France, at once offered our joint mediation to Charles and Philip. Neither was willing to accept it: the objections felt to it by the Emperor were not indeed insurmountable; but Alberoni's only reply was to fit out a larger fleet than that which had conquered Sardinia, while he kept its destination entirely secret. To guard against danger in any quarter, we, at the beginning of 1718, sent a fleet to the Mediterranean, under Sir George Byng, but still continued our endeavours to avert hostilities by negotiation. With the Emperor we at last succeeded; he expressed his willingness to treat with Spain; and declared his accession to the Triple which thus became the Quadruple Alliance, to which we now invited also the adhesion of Savoy. But meanwhile Alberoni, still furious and resolute, at the beginning of July had sent forth the second armament which he had prepared, and which surpassed any that had left the Spanish harbours for upwards of a century: twenty-nine splendid ships of war escorted a body of transports, conveying thirty-five thousand men, with a huge train of

artillery, to Sicily : which then formed the most valuable portion of the Duke of Savoy's dominions, but was expected to prove a conquest as easy as Sardinia.

Such a force was, at all events, beyond the power of the Sicilians to resist ; Palermo fell at once, and the fleet pressed onwards to attack Messina. That town also surrendered ; but the garrison retired to the castle, which supplied means for a more protracted defence, and assistance was believed to be at hand. A month earlier Byng had arrived off Cadiz ; and, still hoping to avert hostilities, had communicated his instructions to the Spanish Court. But, as his message was treated with contempt, he proceeded into the Mediterranean ; and arrived at Naples the day after the Spanish troops landed at Messina. Here the news reached him of the danger of that important place ; and, taking on board two thousand of the Emperor's soldiers as a reinforcement to the garrison, he hastened under a press of sail to its succour. On the 9th of August he arrived at the Faro di Messina ; and, making one more effort for peace, he proposed to the Spanish Admiral, Castaneta, a suspension of arms for two months, to give time for the ministers of their respective countries to negotiate. Castaneta haughtily rejected every pacific overture. On this Byng landed the German troops on the mainland to await the issue of the conflict, and then returned to attack the Spanish fleet. The force under his command was rather inferior in the number of ships, but slightly superior in the number of guns : the victory was complete and decisive. Castaneta detached one division of six vessels, with several fireships and storeships, towards the Sicilian shore ; but Byng sent a squadron of equal force under Captain Walton, to pursue it, who captured or destroyed the whole of it. And he himself, in an attack upon the main fleet, had almost equal success. Nothing could exceed the gallantry displayed by Castaneta and his captains, but they had comparatively little experience in naval tactics. Ship after



ship struck, Castaneta himself was taken prisoner, and of the whole expedition only ten vessels escaped.

The victory, great as it was, did not enable Byng to save Messina. The Marquis de Lede still pressed on the siege of the castle with his whole force, and it soon surrendered. It was rather in its ultimate effects that the destruction of the Spanish fleet proved all-important. We still hesitated to declare formal war; nor was it till the 17th of December that we issued such a declaration; and the only warlike enterprise by which we supported it was an attack upon Vigo in the autumn of 1719, which Admiral Mighels and Lord Cobham had no difficulty in taking. But during the summer we had been making vigorous diplomatic efforts to procure the overthrow of Alberoni; and Philip, more disgusted at the disasters which the Cardinal's warlike policy had brought on the fleet than impressed by the benefits which his administrative skill had conferred on the national and commercial prosperity of the kingdom, in December of the same year banished him from the country, acceded to the Quadruple Alliance, and consented to the transfer by which the Duke of Savoy exchanged Sicily for Sardinia with the Emperor, and assumed the higher title of King of Sardinia, which, we have recently seen his successor commute into the more august appellation of King of Italy.

Peace had hardly been re-established in the South of Europe when it was again threatened in the North, where the death of Charles of Sweden produced a total change in the policy and prospects of those kingdoms which lay on the shores of the Baltic. His sister and successor, Queen Ulrica, secured the friendship of George I. by ceding the Duchies of Bremen and Verden to Hanover; but this acquisition made by the British monarch, stimulated the Czar to aim at similar or even greater gains; and he sent a powerful fleet, which ravaged the Swedish coast, and burnt some of the most important places in that kingdom.



We were faithful to our new ally ; and again Norris was sent to the Baltic with a powerful fleet, before which Peter was once more forced to recede without striking another blow. In fact, so completely was our supremacy acknowledged in the Baltic, that six years later, though the Russian Government had made the increase of their navy the object of their most unremitting care, the mere appearance of another fleet, under Sir Charles Wager, was again sufficient to compel a compliance with all our demands, which indeed were limited to the protection of our Swedish ally and the necessary security of our own commerce.

During the later years of the reign of George I. the kingdom enjoyed peace with every country but Spain ; and even with that country it was not broken by any formal declaration of war, though each sent forth a powerful armament to attack the other. Philip had never ceased to desire the recovery of Gibraltar, and at the end of 1726 despatched a force of twenty thousand men to lay siege to it. It was of no good omen for his success that the veteran Marquis of Villadarias declined the command, assuring his master that, while we had command of the sea, any attempts to wrest the fortress from us must prove fruitless. The Count de las Torres, with less judgment, undertook the enterprise ; but wholly failed in even alarming the garrison, who were abundantly furnished with supplies of all kinds by a squadron under the command of Sir John Jennings, which rode unmolested in the harbour. We, on our part, aiming a blow at what had always proved the most vulnerable part of the Spanish dominions, despatched a fleet to the West Indies, under the command of Admiral Hosier. His object, according to the orders he received, was to blockade the harbour of Porto Bello, so as to prevent the treasure-ships from quitting it ; or, should they persist in setting sail, to capture them, though rather as securities for peace than as prizes of war. They, however, lay safe beneath the guns of Porto Bello : while he chafed

in vain at his instructions, which forbade him to attack them while in harbour. His captures were confined to a few private trading vessels ; and meantime his crews were attacked by disease, which thinned their numbers to a greater degree, and more painfully, than the fiercest action. At the beginning of the next reign he himself died of fever ; or, according to his friends, of vexation at the inglorious inaction to which his instructions had confined him. And, in the eyes of his contemporaries, this latter opinion was confirmed by the ballad of a popular poet, which pictured, in unusually vigorous language, his expectations and his disappointments.\*

The last act of this reign was the signing of the preliminaries of peace between Austria, France, England, and Holland ; on which, though Philip withheld his formal assent to their ratification, he withdrew his troops from before Gibraltar, and became, practically, as much at peace with us as the rest of the world. Ten days afterwards, on the 9th of June, George I., while on a journey to Hanover, died of apoplexy. His death made no immediate difference in the posture of affairs. The new King was, indeed, inclined to war, but his great minister, Walpole, was both on principle an advocate of peace, and was also convinced that it was especially indispensable for the kingdom at this time, when the Jacobites, whose hopes had been greatly encouraged by the recent birth of an heir to the Pretender, which had materially increased their influence at foreign courts, were agitating the country with ceaseless intrigues. At last, in November, 1729, the causes of complaint which Philip had against the Emperor overpowered his feelings of dissatisfaction with ourselves ; and he concluded that treaty of defensive alliance with us and the French, which is known by the name of the Treaty of Seville. Nine years of uninterrupted peace ensued : uninterrupted, that is, by any formal or authorised action of any government,

\* See Glover's ballad of ' Admiral Hosier's Ghost.'

though frequent instances of ill-feeling towards our merchants displayed by the Spanish cruisers, especially in the West Indies, showed that the hostility of their nation to us was stifled rather than quenched. The Spaniards, when their conduct was complained of, justified themselves by accusing the captains of our merchantmen of all kinds of illicit trading, in violation not only of the general laws of Spain, but also of the express provisions of the recently-made treaty. And there can be little doubt that in many cases the justification so pleaded was well-founded. But, however that may have been, the frequent repetition of acts of violence, of complaints, and justifications, were the certain foundation, and sign, and aggravation of an ill-feeling which could hardly have any other issue, than war. Petitions were presented to our Parliament; angry speeches were made in support of the petitioners; and at last the sparks were kindled into a flame by the production at the bar of the House of Commons of the master of a trading-vessel, named Jenkins, who averred that a Spanish captain had boarded him, had cut off one of his ears, and had bidden him carry it to his King, with a message purporting that he should like to treat his Majesty in the same manner. Being asked what he felt when thus inhumanly treated: "I looked up," said Captain Jenkins, "to my God for support, and to my country for revenge." At a later period doubts were thrown upon the strict accuracy of this story. Some affirmed that he had lost his ear in the pillory, while others denied that he had ever lost it at all,\* but at the moment no one doubted his tale, and few ventured to show a disinclination to exult at the prospect of the vengeance which had been so piously invoked. Walpole, indeed, struggled to the last for the preserva-

\* In 1761, Mr. Harvey positively asserted in the House of Commons, as a fact within the knowledge of many of the members, that Jenkins "died with his ears on his head." And this appears to have been Burke's opinion, who (Letter I., 'On a Regicide Peace') talks of "the fable of Captain Jenkins's ears."



tion of peace, but at last even his influence was overborne, and, in October, 1739, war was declared by our Government against Spain.

It was evident that it must be carried on principally by sea ; and accordingly the resources of every dockyard in England were strained to the utmost to despatch fleets at once to every quarter of the globe. Admiral Haddock was sent to the Mediterranean station, where he blockaded Cadiz ; but, though cruisers detached from his fleet occasionally took a few prizes, the caution of the Spaniards prevented him from obtaining any important success, beyond securing the safety of our own commerce. Our chief efforts were again directed to the western Atlantic and the Spanish settlements in those waters. Porto Bello has more than once been mentioned in this history, as the harbour in which the Royal galleons were wont to lie while waiting for the golden treasures which Peru yearly sent forth to enrich the mother country ; it was a place of great natural strength, and, as the habitual depository of such wealth deserved, it was fortified in so formidable a manner that the boldest of our officers had never hitherto ventured to attack it. There was at this time, among the most prominent members of the Opposition, in the House of Commons, a naval captain, named Vernon : a man of bold and blustering tongue, and presumed therefore by many to be of a corresponding readiness of action. In the debates which were frequently occurring on the best manner of prosecuting the war in which we were now engaged, Vernon took occasion to inveigh against the timidity of our officers, who had hitherto, as he phrased it, spared Porto Bello, and affirmed (an apparently safe assertion for one who was only a captain) that he could take it himself with a squadron of six ships. The whole circumstances of Vernon's character, his enterprise, and its success, bear a striking resemblance to Cleon's achievement at Sphacteria, in the days of the great struggle between Athens and her



rival Lacedæmon. As the Athenians were glad to obtain a respite from the bluster of their demagogue by taking him at his word, so now the British ministry caught with equal eagerness at the prospect of delivering themselves from Vernon's harangues. They gave him half as many ships again as he desired, with the rank of vice-admiral ; and in July, 1739, even before the formal declaration of war had been issued, he sailed to perform his undertaking. No boaster ever enjoyed more singular or complete good-fortune. He failed, indeed, in his attempt to intercept some galleons which, as he heard, were on their way to Spain, laden with quicksilver ; but when, on the 20th November, he arrived at his destination, he found Porto Bello, after the long peace, of the termination of which the Governor had as yet received no intelligence, wholly unprepared to resist an attack. Its defences consisted of two forts and a castle, but they had scarcely half their usual garrison ; many of the guns were dismounted, for those that were serviceable there was not sufficient ammunition. The day after his arrival a brief fire of musketry alone sufficed to win the fort that protected the entrance to the harbour : an equally rapid cannonade drove the garrison from the castle, which was the chief protection of the town. The Governor surrendered : and thus, on the afternoon of the 22nd, within forty-eight hours of his first appearance in front of the harbour, Vernon had mastered the place, with a loss of seven men. The inhabitants he treated with a humanity which does him honour ; especially since it was at variance with the inclinations of his men, who had been excited by the tales which they had heard of the cruelty of the Spaniards, to desire to inflict on them a stern retaliation. To the place itself he was less merciful. To prevent it from ever again being as formidable as we had found it before, he blew up and utterly destroyed the fortifications, and carried off all the guns. The money which he found did not exceed ten thousand dol-

lars; but what there was he divided among his sailors, and then retired to Jamaica to prepare for some fresh enterprise.

The news of his success at Porto Bello, which reached England in March, 1740, threw the whole nation into a paroxysm of joy, proportioned rather to the violence of the party-spirit then raging, than to either the difficulty of the enterprise itself or the importance of the advantage derived from it. Not only were the thanks of Parliament voted to him, which was a natural and fairly earned compliment, but his birthday, which happened in the autumn, was celebrated with bonfires and illuminations, and his portrait was adopted as the most favourite sign for ale-houses. Twenty years afterwards, some of these portraits had their noses sharpened, their facings altered, and were made to do duty for Frederick the Great; as others, later still, were transformed into Prince Blucher; but some remain to this day to testify to the steadiness of the enthusiasm of the populace, which the failures of their hero in the following year do not seem to have in the least allayed. So fully, at the moment, did the ministers themselves share in it, that they left the entire conduct of all future operations to his discretion; and sent him ample reinforcements, with a land-force, powerful enough, if well conducted, to have destroyed half the Spanish settlements. When it had all arrived, the ships under his command amounted, transports included, to a hundred and twenty-four, and the troops were not less than twelve thousand. But, beyond the destruction of a small fort at Chagres, and the seizure of the merchandise and treasure which that town contained, the value of which did not exceed a hundred thousand pounds, he effected nothing with the magnificent armament thus placed at his disposal. It was probably unfortunate that Lord Cathcart, the original commander of the military part of the expedition, died before anything could be undertaken; as his rank might have contributed to keep the Admiral under some little

restraint. But General Wentworth, who succeeded him, was likewise an officer of reputation; and Vernon's temper, always domineering and arrogant, and now inflamed to a most extravagant pitch of elation by his success at Porto Bello, and the praises which it had obtained for him, would probably have led him to quarrel with any one who could claim the least degree of co-ordinate authority.

The year 1740 he spent partly in one or two ineffectual attempts to intercept some of the Spanish squadrons; and partly in refitting his own ships in the harbour of Port Royal. And at the beginning of 1741, the whole of his reinforcement having by that time arrived, after deliberating with Wentworth and with the Governor of Jamaica, whom he was enjoined to consult, it was decided to employ the whole force against Carthagena. This great city, the most valuable possession of the Spaniards on the mainland, was strongly fortified, as its importance deserved, and was held by a garrison of four thousand men; who, having had some intimation of the impending attack, in addition to the ordinary defences, had fastened a strong boom across the inner harbour. Still, so overwhelming was the force at the disposal of the British commanders, that all resistance on the part of the Spaniards must have proved ineffectual, had not the precipitation, negligence, mismanagement and ill-temper of Vernon marred the whole enterprise. Our ships were so numerous that the attention of the Spanish garrison could hardly be directed at once to all the points which they might assail: accordingly, while one squadron was employed in landing troops at a short distance from the town, another attracted the more immediate notice of the garrison to itself, by directing a heavy fire upon the outermost forts: yet, so ill were the vessels placed, that they suffered more than the towers which they assailed; and one ship, the *Shrewsbury*, 80, was towed out of action in an almost sinking



state. A day or two afterwards the artillery belonging to the army was landed, some additional guns were furnished from the ships, and some heavy batteries were erected, which at first silenced those of the enemy which were most exposed to their fire ; but we were so slow in prosecuting the advantage thus gained, that the Spaniards repaired their works and presently rendered them even stronger than before. After this a captain named Lestock was entrusted with a fine squadron of picked ships, to make a general attack on the whole line of the seaward defences ; but this movement had been so injudiciously planned that, though Lestock exerted himself to execute his orders with great energy, he found himself quite unable to carry in his ships near enough to the land to produce any great effect. Other attacks were made ; but so many days were suffered to elapse between each, that the Spaniards had ample leisure to repair all the damage that we inflicted. They made sacrifices also with great judgment : sinking some of their own ships to impede our approach to the most accessible points ; abandoning and destroying their least tenable forts ; and concentrating their whole strength on a successful defence of the more important positions. Meanwhile the climate, which is very trying to those who are not used to it, came to their assistance ; sickness to an alarming extent broke out among the British soldiers, killing numbers, and wasting the strength of those whom it failed to kill : while by this time the Admiral had become so jealous of, and even hostile to Wentworth that he refused him the most ordinary assistance and co-operation. It seemed as if, though Vernon was desirous to take Carthagena, he would prefer failure to letting the army share in the success. Wentworth continued to conduct his own operations with all the vigour that the enfeebled state of the army would allow. At one time he landed a force in the rear of the city, so as entirely to cut off the commu-



nications between the citizens and the adjacent country ; but Vernon refused to let the ships supply him with provisions, and even with water, without which he could not maintain himself in that advantageous position. Every day the quarrels between the two commanders became more bitter, while the health of the men became worse and worse. At last, on the 9th of May, rather more than nine weeks after the beginning of the siege, the enterprise was given up, and the whole armament returned to Jamaica ; having lost a great number of men from sickness, and having inflicted no injury whatever on the enemy greater than they could and did repair within a few days of our withdrawal.

When the fleet had refitted and the soldiers had in some degree recovered their health, an attempt was made to efface the memory of this discreditable failure by an attack upon Cuba ; but this new enterprise was, if possible, worse conceived and worse executed than the last ; while the ill-feeling still subsisting between Vernon and Wentworth would have prevented even the best-laid scheme from succeeding. The object was the reduction of Santiago ; and it was proposed to land a military force at some favourable spot, to march against it by land, while the fleet should batter it on the opposite side. The soldiers were disembarked without difficulty, at a point about sixty miles from the town ; but now the General resolved to retaliate on the Admiral. In his opinion, the miscarriage before Carthagena had been owing solely to Vernon's jealousy of the army : he himself now had it certainly in his power to march into Santiago almost without resistance ; but he preferred sacrificing his own reputation to taking any step which might retrieve that of his colleague. Accordingly, after halting a day or two on the spot where he had disembarked, he declared that the reports which he had received of the difficulties of the intervening country and of the strength of the Spaniards

forbade him to advance. He re-embarked his troops, and once more the expedition returned to Jamaica.

The next year Vernon spent partly in projecting expeditions, against Panama and other places, which, however, were all successively abandoned, and partly in wrangling with the General, with the Governor of Jamaica, and with everyone else with whom he was brought into contact. The only result of all his preparations was the occupation of the insignificant island of Rattan in the Bay of Honduras ; after which he returned to England, having stayed in the West Indies much too long for his reputation. He then began to quarrel with the authorities at home, and a few years afterwards, for publishing libels on the Admiralty, containing copies of correspondence which it was a manifest breach of confidence to divulge, he was struck off the Navy List : nor, though he was undoubtedly a brave man, in which respect he excelled his Athenian prototype, can it be denied that he deserved his fate, or that his blind arrogance, his bitter tongue, and his impracticable temper, disqualified him from ever rendering any service to his country, except when aided, as at Porto Bello, by the most extraordinary good fortune.

At the same time that Vernon was first despatched across the Atlantic, a second expedition was projected by the ministry against the Spanish settlements on the western coast of South America, in the Pacific ; but the long and unaccountable delay which intervened between the adoption and the execution of the plan caused a great alteration in its details. The original idea was that one squadron should proceed by the Cape of Good Hope to India, and another by Cape Horn ; that both should meet at Manilla, and then should operate in combination against the Spaniards with the greater effect that the existence of so strong a British force on that side of the world would be wholly unsuspected. Had the entire scheme been carried out as originally designed, a great deal

of subtlety would have been wasted on an object which might as easily have been obtained by simple means ; but procrastination, irresolution, and mismanagement delayed the equipment of the squadrons destined for this service for an entire year ; and then the project of sending one fleet by the Cape of Good Hope was abandoned, and the other expedition was alone persevered in. It was intended solely for conquest and plunder ; but circumstances varied its character so greatly, that, though it succeeded in no small degree in both objects, and especially in the latter, the renown that it conferred on its leader is not so much that of a victorious captain as of a hardy and adventurous navigator ; and the general judgment, even to the present day, compares him, not with Blake or Hawke, but with Cavendish or Cook.

It was September, 1740, when this second expedition sailed from Portsmouth under the command of Commodore George Anson, who had already seen as much service as the long continuance of peace had permitted ; having been present, as lieutenant of the *Montague*, at Byng's victory over the Spaniards at Messina, and having since that time, while in command of one small cruiser or another, distinguished himself by the activity with which he had repressed the lawlessness of smugglers, and chastised the still more unscrupulous and criminal audacity of pirates and buccaneers. The force placed under his command consisted of six ships ; his own pendant flew on board the *Centurion*, of 60 guns ; two had 50 guns, one had 40, one 28 ; the smallest, the *Trial*, was only a sloop of 8 guns. The ships were sufficient for the objects which were prescribed to him ; but the crews were utterly unfit for that or for any other enterprise requiring courage and endurance, or even bodily health and vigour. Not only was every ship short of her complement, but of those who were embarked, numbers were drafted out of the hospitals ; some half-cured of their wounds or ailments,

some not cured at all, and some, through age, wholly incapable of being cured. One man had actually been wounded at the battle of the Boyne fifty years before. It was rather a relief than otherwise, that half of these invalids deserted before the expedition set sail.

Anson's instructions directed him to make his way, either by Cape Horn or the Straits of Magelhaens, to the Spanish coast of the South Seas ; where he was "to use his best endeavours to annoy and distress the Spaniards either at sea or on land ;" "to attack any places that he might judge worthy of making such an enterprise upon ; to cultivate a good understanding with the Indians on the coast of Chili," because it was believed that they might be inclined to join him against the Spaniards : to attack Callao, if practicable ; and if, as was reported, he should find the Spanish settlers in Peru disposed to revolt from their obedience to the King of Spain, on account of the great oppression and tyranny exercised by the Spanish viceroys and governors, to encourage and support them in such revolt ; to endeavour to capture the Spanish vessels trading between Lima and Panama ; to make an attempt to destroy this last-mentioned town ; to assist troops which would be sent from England in the ensuing spring, to make a secure settlement either at Panama or some other place that he should think more proper ; and finally to intercept the Acapulco ship, which sailed from that place for Manilla once a year. After the accomplishment of these objects he was left at liberty to return home either by Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope, according to his own judgment ; being further authorised to leave some of his ships in the South Sea for the security of any acquisitions he might have been able to make.

It can hardly be denied that these instructions provided full employment for such a fleet as was now entrusted to Anson, even had it been complete in all its circumstances of crews and equipment. That, deficient as it was in



both these respects, he nevertheless accomplished no inconsiderable portion of the objects prescribed to him, can only be attributed to an admirable union of resolution and fortitude with great fertility of resource, and that peculiar talent of inspiring confidence in, and obtaining influence over one's fellow-men, which of all gifts is the most indispensable for the performance of great actions. Difficulties had beset Anson from the commencement of the equipment of his squadron ; from the moment of his departure they pressed upon him to a still more dangerous degree. The lateness of the season exposed him to the equinoctial storms while in the middle of the Atlantic ; and this year they were so violent, and blew from so unfavourable a quarter, that he was forty days in reaching Madeira, and above three months elapsed before he sighted the South American coast, at the lower extremity of Brazil. The roughness of the protracted passage had already had such an effect on the feeble health of the majority of his crews that sickness had broken out among them to an unprecedented extent ; many were dead, and, of the living, eighty on board the *Centurion* alone were wholly disabled. The invalids were landed on the island of Santa Catarina for the recovery of their health ; and extensive alterations were made in the internal arrangements and ventilation of the ships, with a view to prevent, if possible, a recurrence of the malady which had proved so fatal ; but during the sojourn on this island the sickness and the number of deaths increased rather than diminished, and the Commodore began to fear that the real seed of the evil lay, not in the hardships of the voyage but in the total unfitness of the men for any work that tasked the strength of either the limbs or the constitution. In the middle of January, 1741, they started afresh ; and two months afterwards, they passed through the strait Lemaire, and entered the Pacific ; which, on this occasion, sadly belied its character. They had scarcely reached

the open sea when they encountered a storm of singular fury and duration ; which lasted, with greater or less violence, for nearly two months, scattering the squadron, which was never completely reunited, and driving the *Centurion*, of whose adventures alone we have any distinct account, far out of the course intended for her by her commander. It was near the end of May before the crew of that now solitary vessel was gladdened by a return of fine weather ; and by that time it was reduced to less than one-half of the number which had quitted England. Above two hundred men had been consigned to the deep, or to the grave at Santa Catarina ; and of the survivors one-half were so enfeebled by disease as to be incapable of performing the ordinary duties of seamen. After a time the *Centurion* was rejoined by two of her comrades, the *Gloucester* and the *Trial* ; but those ships had suffered in their crews even more than herself, and brought her only an appearance, and that but short-lived, of additional strength. Yet, discouraging as the loss of the largest half of his squadron at the very beginning of his enterprise must have been, Anson's courage never failed. The three vessels had taken refuge in the harbour of a small island, which the genius of a great writer has invested with a more universal and imperishable interest than belongs to any other spot in the vast Pacific, the island of Juan Fernandez, where the real adventures of Selkirk have afforded a foundation for the immortal tale of Robinson Crusoe. The island bloomed with natural beauty, and, what to the sick and worn-out seaman was of even more consequence, it abounded with wholesome food of all kinds. They even believed at first that some of the goats on which they feasted were the identical animals which had been caught and released by their countryman, identifying them by the slit in the ears, with which Selkirk had marked his : though it was subsequently

found that the goats in the neighbouring islands had a similar mark.

So completely, before they reached this island, was the strength of even the more healthy men prostrated that, beneficial as the rest and the change of diet proved, it was three months before they were sufficiently recovered to pursue their voyage. When they again set sail, a year had elapsed from the date of their departure from England, and as, even at Juan Fernandez, many had died, the three vessels had now scarcely one-third of their original crews surviving. They had quitted England with nine hundred and sixty-nine men and boys : there were now left but two hundred and fourteen in the *Centurion*, eighty-two in the *Gloucester*, and thirty-nine in the *Trial*. Yet, with these crippled resources, Anson set himself to carry out his orders as resolutely as if he had been still at the head of the entire fleet which a year before had weighed anchor at Spithead ; and he detached his comrades to cruise in different directions, that, by spreading widely, they might have the greater chance of intercepting the Spanish traders, which at that time swarmed over every part of those southern waters. All were fortunate, as they deserved to be. Each vessel captured two prizes, some of which were laden with cargoes of great price ; while one had a treasure of a value beyond that of gold or jewels, a female passenger of such marvellous beauty that Anson, on receiving a report of her charms, refused to trust himself in her presence : till, on being released from her captivity, the lady herself declined to depart unless she might be allowed to see her captor and to thank him for his magnanimity. His biographers have been equally impressed with it, and comparing it to examples of ancient virtue, have attributed his subsequent successes to his conduct in this instance ; since he who could thus equal the continence of Scipio, might well be expected likewise to rival his triumphs.

One of the objects presented to Anson had been the reduction of some of the Spanish settlements in South America; and, from the reports which he received from some of his prisoners, of the treasures deposited at Paita, on the coast of Chili, he selected that town as the object of his first attack. Arriving in its harbour by night, he at once sent his boats ashore with a well-armed body of picked men, under the command of his first-lieutenant, Mr. Brett. The surprise was complete. When the inhabitants woke in the morning, they found the place in our possession, the governor fled, and our sailors busy in stripping the customhouse and government stores of their treasures of bullion and precious stones, the churches of their plate, and the private warehouses of all such articles as were at once valuable and portable. A great portion of the merchandise which they contained was, however, too bulky to remove; and accordingly Anson proposed to the inhabitants that they should ransom it and the town itself by the payment of a sum of money; a requisition which was afterwards reduced to a demand for cattle and provisions for the ship. As the citizens refused to give either money or supplies, he burnt the town and all that it contained. It is a singular proof of how completely the principles of civilized warfare were still considered to be confined to Europe, that not only was this act, worthy only of the most lawless pirate or buccaneer, reported by Anson to the authorities at home, and approved of by them as one which required no explanation, much less any justification, but that it awakened no particular resentment in the breasts of the Spaniards themselves. On the contrary, they were much more impressed by his humanity to his prisoners, and the forbearance he showed to the ladies who had fallen into his hands, than by the destruction of their property and their homes. A year afterwards some of the crew of the *Wager*, whose sufferings form a separate and most melancholy episode in the history of this expedition, were



conveyed as prisoners to Santiago, a city at some distance higher up the same coast, where they found the citizens full of praises of Anson's humanity, and eager to requite it by similar kindness to those of his countrymen whom the fury of the elements had thus placed in their power.

The plunder obtained at Paita had proved far inferior to the expectations of the captors ; since a rumour of the approach of an English squadron, which had reached the town a few days before their appearance, had given the inhabitants time to remove a great portion of their treasures into the interior. The Commodore himself received nothing whatever ; for, finding that a quarrel had arisen between the boats' crews who had actually taken the place, and those who had remained on board the *Centurion*, with respect to the right of the latter to share in the booty which the others considered to belong to them alone, Anson, while justly deciding that both divisions were equally entitled to share, softened the disappointment to those to whom his decision was unfavourable, by throwing his own share into the common stock, and refusing for himself all participation in the division. Encouraged by this splendid and well-timed liberality, the men gladly heard the announcement of their commander's resolution to seek for more prizes. Vernon's failure at Carthagena had rendered the projected attack on Panama impracticable, or, at least, undesirable ; and, after collecting all the information that could be obtained, Anson resolved to concentrate all his efforts on the intercepting of the great Acapulco galleon, the capture of which had been specially recommended to him in his original instructions. As a preparatory measure he landed his prisoners ; burnt or scuttled all the vessels except the *Centurion* ; and removed the crews of the *Gloucester* and the *Trial* into that vessel, which, even then, had not half of her proper complement. It was destined to a still further reduction. After quitting Paita, he had obtained fresh provisions at different places ; at Quito

especially he had procured a large supply of turtle ; and this return to a wholesome and nutritious diet had so restored the seamen's health that for a while he flattered himself that his troubles on that score were terminated. But when he quitted the coast, and plunged again into the open sea, disease broke out with all its former violence. Again the scurvy spread through the whole crew, not sparing the Commodore himself ; but affecting all alike with utter prostration of strength of mind as well as of body. Numbers died, and those who survived were so enfeebled as to be scarcely able to navigate the ship. To add to their distress, the wind failed them ; and they found that, through the imperfection of their instruments, they had strayed from their intended course, and were unable to determine with precision where they were. The line, however, of the great ship, the present object of their search, was known to be from Acapulco to Manilla ; and while bearing up towards that line, they reached the Ladrone Islands in August, 1742, and anchored on the coast of Tinian, the largest of the group. It belonged in name to the Spaniards, but was used by them as little more than a store from which to supply their settlements in the neighbourhood with provisions, which it produced in great plenty and variety ; abounding as it did in all kinds of cattle and birds, and also in wholesome vegetables and fruits. These last indeed, to the sick and almost dying sailors, proved the most beneficial of all. Acids are now known to be the best cure for scurvy ; and lemons, limes, and oranges, constituted a large proportion of the produce of Tinian. Revelling in them, the men rapidly recovered health and strength. But while the Commodore felt his hopes of fresh successes revive with this recovery, they were almost overthrown by a new disaster. The main body of the men remained, of course, on board the ship : but he himself, to facilitate and hasten his perfect recovery, had removed on shore with a few of the worst invalids ; and the greater

part of the crew also landed daily, partly for health, and partly to collect provisions. Suddenly, a day or two before the autumnal equinox, a furious storm fell on the island, which broke the Centurion from her moorings, and drove her out to sea. She was soon lost to sight; and when, on the subsidence of the gale, she did not return, it was concluded that the scanty crew who had remained on board had proved unable to manage her, and that she had gone down before the violence of the tempest. Those on the island were panic-stricken; they would have abandoned themselves to utter despair, had it not been for the firmness of Anson himself, who, though he too gave up all hope of seeing the ship again, and of any further success, still devised a plan which appeared sufficient for the preservation of their lives.

As he approached Tinian he had seized a small bark, such as is used by the natives in those seas; and he conceived the idea that, by lengthening her a few feet, he might render her capable of conveying himself and his remaining crew to China, from which country a passage to Europe might ultimately be obtained. Catching courage from his indomitable example, the men worked diligently at the task of thus preparing the little vessel for her intended voyage, and had nearly completed it when, after nineteen days' absence, a ship came in sight, which was speedily recognised as the missing Centurion. She had been driven to a great distance, and her crew had been hardly tasked to weather the storm, and to bring her back to her station. They had done so, however, without having sustained any great damage. The joy of those to whom their return brought renewed hopes of successful enterprise was in full proportion to the anguish with which they had before abandoned that prospect; and an idea of its tumultuous rapture may perhaps be best conveyed by the fact that even Anson's own habitual composure was not proof against the unlooked-for change. He had borne



the folly and perverseness of the authorities at home ; and the rapid diminution of his crews from disease and want ; and the fury of the storm ; and the dispersion and loss of the rest of his squadron ; and even the recent disappearance of the Centurion, and the consequent destruction of all his hopes of further triumph, riches, and fame, with a calm, unvaried equanimity, so composed and cheerful that neither danger, nor hardship, nor personal sickness, had ever hardened it into sternness. He had seemed, like the just man of the Roman lyrist, one who, even if the world had suddenly crumbled around him, would have fallen, crushed indeed, but still undaunted amid the ruins. But the firmness which no anxiety, no disappointment, no terrors, no sufferings, had been able to shake, was for a moment overcome by the suddenness of delight. When he heard that the identity of the ship was ascertained, he threw down the axe with which he was labouring, at the bark, and rushed down to the water's edge to feast his eyes with the sight ; while his repeated exclamations of ecstasy and thankfulness amazed his followers, who now saw that his former steadiness of demeanour had been the result of no indifference to the ordinary feelings of humanity, but of a resolute self-command, proof against every form of adversity, against all but the softening influence of unexpected happiness.

The design of intercepting the great galleon was now resumed with redoubled resolution. After devoting a few days to resting the men who had brought back the ship, and refitting and victualling her for her voyage, they quitted Tinian for Macao, where they arrived in November, and where they wintered in safety and comfort. Macao belonged to the Portuguese, but the governor was in some degree subject to the Viceroy of Canton ; and, as the Chinese were never fond of encouraging foreign visitors to their harbours, they made a great difficulty of allowing Anson to purchase the articles necessary for the complete



repair of his ship, and even provisions for the subsistence of his crew, till Anson threatened the Cantonese not only with the wrath of his sovereign, who was far distant, but with his own anger, which was not to be despised while the *Centurion* lay, with her guns loaded, under their walls ; he even intimated that, if, through the denial of more legitimate provisions, his men should find themselves on the point of starvation, they might be tempted to relieve their hunger at the expense of the plump well-fed Chinese whom they saw around them. Probably the viceroy did not seriously believe the canibal-like hint ; but, after some discussion, he was so daunted by Anson's resolute tone, that he allowed him to purchase what he wanted. And by the end of the winter both ship and men were got entirely ready for their new enterprise.

Towards the end of April, 1743, they quitted Macao, giving out that they were bound for Batavia, on their way to England ; but, as soon as they were out of sight of land, they bore to the eastward, to place themselves on the track of their intended prey. That they should take her if they met her, no man doubted : yet any but British sailors would have felt doubts ; for when the whole ship's company was mustered, it numbered only two hundred and one, including officers and boys. Even of that small force many were still feeble from long illness ; and the highest calculation did not raise the able seamen to above forty-five. It was the last day of May when they reached the chosen cruising-ground ; and they had not long to wait : on the 20th of June the rich ship was seen bearing straight towards them. She was the *Nuestra Senhora del Caba Donga*, bearing an admiral's flag ; manned by a crew of five hundred and fifty men, armed with forty-two heavy cannon and twenty-eight lighter guns called *pateraroes* ; and laden with a million and a half of dollars. Her commander, Don Geronimo Montero, did not decline the combat, but bore fearlessly onwards. Anson did not open

his fire till she came within pistolshot ; when a battle began, which was continued for an hour and a half with unremitting fierceness on both sides. The Spaniards fought bravely, but their gunnery was far inferior to ours in precision and rapidity. Fifty-eight Spaniards were slain, and eighty-three wounded ; while our loss, of both kinds, amounted to no more than thirty-one. At last Don Montero struck his flag, and Anson found himself in possession of the prize which for at least two years had been the principal object of his thoughts. The victory was scarcely assured when news was brought to him of the most appalling danger which can befall a sailor : the *Centurion* was on fire near her magazine. His immoveable firmness here served him well ; without showing the least symptom of surprise he at once repaired to the scene of danger, and by the quiet promptitude of his measures extinguished the flames before the majority of his crew knew of their existence.

He was made more uneasy by his prisoners ; not only because they nearly trebled the number of his own crew, but because he had no means of supplying so large a company with food, and more especially with water. He resolved therefore on returning to China ; and at Canton he landed his prisoners, and sold his prize which he had no means of carrying home. The Chinese received him with greater honour than before. The viceroy granted him an audience at which all the principal mandarins attended ; and forbore to exact the dues usually paid by vessels entering the port, but which he was aware that Anson was resolved to refuse. And the Commodore, triumphing in having, as he conceived, established a precedent for English ships using the Chinese ports without payment, in December, 1743, set sail for England ; and, after a prosperous voyage of six months, anchored in safety at Spithead.

For himself and his crew, in spite of all the unparalleled

hardships which they had undergone, it had been a prosperous voyage. They had brought back a booty amounting in value to above a million and a quarter of money; and he had established a fame, which no living man equalled, as a brave and skilful seaman. But the rest of his squadron had not fared so well. We have seen that the Gloucester and the Trial were destroyed by himself. The Severn and the Pearl, after encountering a variety of misfortunes, and being nearly taken by a fleet which the Spaniards had sent out to intercept the English on their way across the Atlantic, returned to England with the loss of the greater part of their crews from sickness, without having met with the very slightest countervailing success. The fate of the last ship of the squadron, the Wager, has acquired a melancholy celebrity, partly from the completeness of her destruction, and partly from the circumstance that one of the few survivors, to whom we are indebted for the history of her loss and of the sufferings of her crew after that event, was Lieutenant Byron, the grandfather of the great poet, who has worked up the miseries of his ancestor and his comrades into one of the most striking descriptions that ever proceeded from his pen. The Wager, like the rest of the squadron, lost the company of the Centurion in the great storm which fell upon them on leaving the Strait of Le Maire. Soon afterwards she was wrecked on a desert island; and for many months her crew suffered a complication of miseries, such as few other men have endured and survived. Severity of weather, want of food, and presently of clothing, were aggravated by the morose churlishness of their captain, a man sadly different from Anson. His misconduct almost provoked a mutiny: once some of the men tried to murder him. At last, one body, consisting of thirty of the strongest men, did desert him: took the long boat with most of the provisions, sailed away, and eventually reached Brazil in safety.

Byron had a spirit something like that of Anson himself; he bore his sufferings, and even the selfish ill-temper of his captain without complaining. With rare loyalty he remained by his superior officer, whom he could neither love nor respect; till, at last, after a variety of strange adventures and incredible sufferings, he, with the captain and two midshipmen, the only survivors of the whole ship's crew, (except those whose desertion we have mentioned), was conducted by some native Indians to the Spanish town of Castro. They were transported from place to place as prisoners, but were generally treated with kindness, which as we have already said the Spaniards themselves attributed to their grateful recollection of Anson's humanity to those who had fallen into his hands; and, after two years passed in this state, they were sent to Brest in a French ship that had put into Valparaiso, with the intention that they should, on their arrival at that port, be conveyed to Spain. The Spanish government at once released them; and, having obtained a passage in a Dutch vessel, they at last reached England, in November, 1745: nearly a year and a half after Anson himself had returned, and when their friends had long given up all hope of seeing them.



## CHAPTER X.

1740—1748.

Ambiguous conduct of the French — Complaints of our merchants — Investigation of the North-west Passage — Matthews assumes the command in the Mediterranean — His quarrel with Lestock — His general energy and ability — Commodore Martin at Naples — Open war with France — Abortive attempt to invade England — The battle of Toulon — Lestock's misconduct — Courts-martial — Attempt at Port l'Orient — Matthews takes care of Italy — Rebellion of 1745 — Engagement between the Lion and the Elizabeth — Barnet's action in India — Able plan of Labourdonnais — Dupleix — Peyton's misconduct — Warren takes Cape Breton — Anson defeats the French off Cape Finisterre — Hawke's victory — Negotiations — Siege of Pondicherry — Knowles' action in the West Indies — Peace.

WE must retrace our steps across the Atlantic to the first operations of the war in European waters. While Haddock was blockading Cadiz, and preventing the Spaniards from even attempting to strike any blow with the fleet which was lying ready for sea in that harbour. Admiral Balchen was sent out with another squadron, and Sir John Norris with a third; but all these expeditions, as well as those of the Spaniards in this quarter, proved singularly unfruitful. After a cruise of a few days Norris was driven back into Torbay by a storm which some of his ships had no small difficulty in weathering; Balchen tried in vain to intercept a Spanish flotilla which arrived safely at Santander with a cargo of enormous value; and a strong Spanish squadron which had been sent out to catch Balchen equally failed in its object. Towards the end of the summer, a report which reached Haddock of a projected attack on Minorca induced him to repair thither; and the fleet in Cadiz harbour, taking advantage of his absence, escaped to Ferrol, but was not

more able to achieve anything from thence than it had been while detained in the south.

Meanwhile the ambiguous conduct of the French complicated matters, and strangely embarrassed our officers on the Spanish station. They were professedly in alliance with us, but all the operations of their Toulon fleet were apparently directed with a view to protect the Spaniards from us, if not to provoke us to a rupture with themselves. On one occasion, Haddock, with thirteen sail of fifty guns and upwards, and seven frigates, pursued a Spanish fleet which had entered the Mediterranean, and was on the point of engaging it, when it effected a junction with a French fleet of about equal strength. It seemed so evident that, if he then attacked the Spaniards, he should have both fleets on him at once, that he forbore, and suffered them to proceed without molestation to Barcelona. At another time, two of his ships, the *Dragon*, 60, and the *Folkestone*, 40, actually were engaged for some time with three French ships of superior force, which refused to satisfy the English captain of their nationality, till the chief vessel, the *Borée*, 64, was on the point of being captured. The French Commodore, M. de Caylus, assumed an injured tone, pretending to believe, from the manner of the senior British officer, Captain Barnet, that there must be war between France and England, of which he himself was ignorant; but his whole conduct showed that it was he who in reality desired to entrap us into hostilities, though he began to repent of his design when he found that his superiority could not save him from a defeat.

In the North American seas we and our enemy had nearly equal fortune. Some of our cruisers showed great gallantry and skill, capturing several of the Spanish merchantmen. But we lost nearly as many as we took, and again the discontent and clamours of our merchants became violent; being excited not only by the losses that they had sustained, but by party spirit, which was now

running high against Walpole's administration, and which, at the beginning of the next year, produced its overthrow. As had been the case in Queen Anne's time, the vehemence of the complaints of our traders, which were not wholly without foundation, produced a speedy remedy of the evils against which they remonstrated; and the authorities at the Admiralty so strengthened our squadrons in those regions where our commerce was most liable to interruption that, for the remainder of the war, the advantage was on our side in that respect as manifestly as in every other. And a proof of the growing interest in all naval affairs that was now felt by the nation, and was acknowledged by our governors, was afforded by the fact that, while we were thus sending out warlike expeditions to every part of the world, we were able also to spare some attention to objects of nautical science: and as the idea of a north-western passage into the Pacific had been lately revived by persons whose acquaintance with the northern districts of America was presumed to add the weight of practical knowledge to theoretical inference, a couple of ships were sent, in the summer of 1741, under the command of Captain Middleton, with orders to endeavour to effect the passage; and, if he should succeed in so doing, then, if possible, to join Anson, who was expected to be about that time in pursuit of the Acapulco galleon. Middleton wintered in Hudson's Bay, and, as soon as the spring of 1742 afforded him the slightest prospect of being able to proceed, he advanced as far as a river to which he gave the name of Wager, in honour of the veteran officer who now presided at the Admiralty; but soon afterwards he found himself entirely blockaded by the ice, and he returned home, pronouncing the project of such a route as he had been directed to explore visionary and impracticable. The correctness, however, and even the honesty of his report were loudly assailed. He was charged with having been influenced in making it by a bribe from the Hudson's Bay Company, who conceived it to be for their interest to

discourage all discoveries which might have a tendency to deprive them of the monopoly which they enjoyed. And so strong was the belief that they had this desire, and therefore that there must be something to discover, that, the year after Middleton's return, an Act of Parliament was passed by which a reward of 20,000*l.* was offered to the discoverer of the north-west passage, on the ground that it would be "of great benefit and advantage to the trade of the kingdom."

In the course of the summer, Haddock, through ill-health, was forced to return home, and Commodore Lestock, who had lately brought him out a squadron of fresh ships as a reinforcement, became his temporary successor. He was at once made a rear-admiral ; but as the command in the Mediterranean was too high a post for an officer of that rank, Vice-Admiral Matthews was soon afterwards sent out as Commander-in-chief on that station. Twenty years before, Matthews had distinguished himself by the energy with which he had in India protected our trade from the pirates who at that time swarmed in the Indian seas ; and he was deservedly reputed a brave and skilful officer. And we have already had occasion to mention the courage and conduct of Lestock, who had probably seen as much service as any officer in the navy. Unfortunately, however, a quarrel and enmity of long standing subsisted between the two admirals ; and Matthews, in particular, bore such ill-feeling towards Lestock, that, on accepting the command, he is said to have made a condition that that officer should be recalled. As their animosity was generally known, such a condition ought to have been superfluous ; but, even if it was expressed, it was never acted on, and the evil consequences of such a neglect of the rules of common sense as the appointment of two unfriendly officers to co-operate together were soon seen. From the first moment of Matthews' arrival they began to quarrel violently ; the Commander-in-chief charging the Rear-Admiral with



a neglect both of the general courtesy and respect due to a superior officer, and also of his positive instructions ; and the Rear-Admiral defending himself with great asperity, and at times in language which was almost mutinous. Presently, however, they separated : Matthews detaching Lestock, with the main body of the fleet, to watch the harbour of Toulon, in which a large Spanish fleet was lying ; while he himself being, in addition to his naval authority, invested also with the dignity of ambassador to the king of Sardinia, remained at the Sardinian port of Villa Franca, exercising a general superintendence over everything that could affect our interests in that region. Lestock executed his task with great vigilance and success, and the Vice-Admiral himself showed his capacity for general and extensive command by the completeness of his arrangements in every quarter. He and the captains more immediately concerned gained especial credit for an action which took place in the small harbour formed by the Isle of St. Tropez and the mainland. The Queen of Spain, for Philip V. was a mere puppet in the hands of his able and ambitious wife, was planning to procure an independent principality for her younger son, Don Philip ; and, in order to further this object, a Spanish force was at this moment in Lombardy, carrying on hostilities against the armies of our ally, Maria Theresa. A Spanish squadron of five vessels, laden with supplies of food and ammunition for the troops thus employed, had entered the port of St. Tropez ; and presently found itself watched by the Kingston and Oxford, which Matthews had sent to observe its motions. As the French were still, in name, at peace with us as well as with the Spaniards, the port of St. Tropez was neutral ; but, forgetful of this fact, the Spanish Commadore, in his eagerness to proceed, fired on the Kingston ; and her captain, a son of the veteran Admiral Sir John Norris, at once decided that a neutrality which the Spaniards themselves did not respect could not be permitted to

protect them: he sent in a fireship which he had with him, and burnt the entire squadron. Cardinal Fleury, who at that time was the prime minister of France, is said to have looked upon this exploit as an insult to the French flag, and to have felt it the more deeply because the provocation which the Spanish Captain had so wantonly given manifestly put it out of his power to demand any redress; and, though Fleury himself died soon afterwards, it is not improbable that he bequeathed this feeling of soreness to his successor, and that it had its share in producing the war which broke out openly between us and the French at the beginning of 1744.

Matthews's vigilance on the eastern side of Italy was equally alert, and his selection of his officers was equally happy. Don Carlos, the second son of the Spanish sovereign, who had recently become king of Naples and Sicily, was eager to co-operate in his mother's project for the establishment of his brother in the north of Italy; and with this view he had already sent some regiments to join the Spanish army in that region, and more were being prepared with the same destination. It was evident that, should this design succeed, it would be injurious, if not fatal, to our interests in the Mediterranean and in the south of Europe in general. If the crowns of France, Spain, Naples, and the new kingdom which it was thus hoped to establish, should all be fixed on Bourbon heads, a confederacy would thus be formed which would obtain a predominance in the Mediterranean that we should be unable singlehanded to withstand; especially as Sardinia, harassed by the establishment on her northern frontier of a new and hostile power, and perhaps even made by dismemberment to contribute to its formation, far from being a help to us, would rather be an embarrassment and an incumbrance. Matthews therefore sent Commodore Martin to Naples with three ships of the line and two frigates to compel the King to a renunciation of his design. The

arrival of a British squadron on such an errand filled Carlos with alarm, disappointment, and indignation : with alarm, because he had manifestly no means whatever of resistance ; with disappointment, because, independently of political considerations, he was as eager as his mother for the aggrandisement of his family ; and with indignation, because his Spanish pride, which often rose in proportion to the want of power requisite to support it, could hardly brook the idea of submission to open menace without striking a single blow. The Commodore, however, had no sympathy with his disappointment, and was not inclined to spare his pride a single circumstance of humiliation. On his arrival in the bay the Duke de Montalegre, Carlos's minister, was profuse in his compliments and his assurances of the value his master set on the friendship of England. Martin replied by a brief assertion that the presence of the Neapolitan troops with the Spanish army in Lombardy was a breach of the treaty subsisting between Naples and England (in virtue of which Carlos himself had obtained the throne), and by a peremptory demand for the instant withdrawal of those troops, and for a promise of future neutrality. The Duke asked for delay till His Majesty returned from church. Martin laid his watch on the table, and insisted on a positive answer within an hour. Montalegre sought to protract the discussion by the proposal of conditions to be observed by us in return for his compliance. Martin replied, that if, by the time he had named, he did not receive the King's unequivocal unconditional assent to the demand he had made, he would at once bombard Naples and lay it in ashes. It was to no purpose for a sovereign who was unable to fight to endeavour to treat with a seaman who would not hear of a negociation, and was ready to fight at a moment's warning. Carlos yielded, withdrew his troops, and pledged himself to the observance of a strict neutrality ; but deep offence wrangled in his heart. And



when, many years afterwards, he succeeded to the throne of Spain, the recollection of the submission to which he was now constrained had probably no small share in determining him to enter into the Family Compact, and join his French kinsman in the deadly war he was waging against Great Britain.

Throughout the next year the war continued with a general preponderance of success on our side, but with no such conspicuous exploits or marked results as call for any special description. In the West Indies Sir Chaloner Ogle, who had succeeded Vernon in that command, sent Commodore Knowles with a squadron to attack the Spanish settlements on the Caracca coast; but the Spaniards had had timely warning, and had put their fortresses, La Guayra and Porto Cavallo, into a state of such complete preparation, that, though Knowles attacked them both with great gallantry, he was unable to make any impression on either. In the Mediterranean Lestock continued second in command to Matthews, but, as they were still kept asunder, no mischief ensued from their mutual ill-will, both officers displaying unabated vigilance and energy; preventing the Spaniards from doing us the slightest damage, and at the same time inflicting heavy loss upon them, capturing their cruisers, and almost annihilating their trade with the Levant. Meanwhile our relations with France became day by day less amicable. Cardinal Fleury, who had made the maintenance of peace the prime object of his policy, died at the beginning of 1743; and those who succeeded to his influence were eager partisans, and, indeed, personal friends of the Pretender. By land all appearance of neutrality was soon discarded; and the battle of Dettingen, which was fought in June, was entirely a French and English battle. Nevertheless, as neither country was a principal in the quarrel, no declaration of war was as yet made by either side; and by sea the French still made a profession of neutrality,



which they carried so far that, when the garrison of Toulon had refused a party of our sailors admission into that city, and when, in consequence, a conflict had ensued, in which many lives were lost on both sides, the Governor of Provence made a formal apology to Admiral Matthews, in which he attributed the whole blame to his own countrymen.

But by the beginning of 1744 the influence of the Stuarts had obtained an entire predominance in the French councils. France now made a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with Spain, especially pledging herself to agree to no peace with England till Gibraltar was recovered; and making pompous preparations for an early invasion of England under the greatest general then living, the celebrated Marshal Saxe. We took measures on our part to defeat any attempt of such a nature that should be made; strengthening the forts at the mouths of the Thames and the Medway with new batteries and greatly augmented garrisons, and appointing the veteran Sir John Norris commander-in-chief in the Channel, who at once repaired to the Downs with a splendid fleet of twenty-five sail of the line and eighteen frigates. In the force thus assembled for the defence of our shores were serving some officers who subsequently made for themselves a separate and enduring renown as leaders of our seamen to repeated victory. The Dreadnought was commanded by Captain Boscawen, whose gallantry at a later day in America greatly contributed to some of the most valuable acquisitions made by us in the western hemisphere; the Sutherland by Captain Pocock, who, as the unwearied protector of our Indian settlements, and afterwards as the conqueror of the Havannah, gained an equally high and enduring reputation. A still more brilliant officer than either was the captain of the Sheerness frigate, George Rodney, destined at a subsequent period to deal upon the again united fleets of France and Spain in both hemispheres

the heaviest blows that as yet they had ever sustained. The name of another captain still excites a melancholy interest, from the disgrace and misery in which one unfortunate failure subsequently involved him, and from the courage and dignity with which he bore up against undeserved reproach, condemnation, and death : Captain John Byng had the *St. George*, 90 ; nor, though she was one of the finest vessels in the fleet, did any whisper get abroad that she was entrusted to unworthy hands. Against such an armament no force which the French were able to collect could be of any avail. Charles Edward did, indeed, repair to Saxe's camp, to take a part in his expedition ; and Admiral de Roquefueille put to sea from Brest, with three-and-twenty ships, while the army was embarked at Dunkirk on board a vast number of transports ready to join him as soon as he should appear before that harbour. Missing Norris, the Frenchman advanced as far as Dungeness, and there anchored, thinking the British officer either afraid or unequal to encounter him. But Norris was nearer than he suspected ; and the moment that he received intelligence of the approach of the enemy, he made all sail with every ship of his fleet to meet him. Surprised at the sudden appearance of so overwhelming a force, Roquefueille at once fled ; but, had he not been aided first by the tide, and afterwards by a storm which prevented Sir John from pressing the pursuit with full vigour, he would have found it hard to regain Brest in safety. The army on board the transports suffered greatly from the same gale ; some were forced on board one another, some were driven on shore and wrecked, some went down in deep water ; a great many lives were lost. Saxe led his troops back from the coast, and the young Prince Charles returned to Paris to wait another opportunity of invading England, which, when it did arrive, he found to be no more propitious than that which he was now compelled to relinquish.

Before this time, however, the fleets in the Mediterranean had come into actual and fierce collision. Before M. de Roquefueille quitted Brest as we have just related, another fleet had left the same port under the command of Admiral de Court; with the design of sailing to Toulon, liberating the Spanish fleet which Lestock had been so long blockading in that harbour, and then giving battle to Matthews, who, as he was known to have sent several ships home, was believed to be much weaker than the combined fleets would prove. In one respect M. de Court's plan succeeded: he effected a junction with the Spaniards, and in the second week of February sailed from Toulon with twenty-eight sail of the line and four frigates, in line of battle, looking for the British fleet. In another respect he was greatly deceived: two or three reinforcements had arrived from England, which had raised the force under the command of Matthews to twenty-nine sail of the line and fifteen frigates. No one of our ships approached the size of the Spanish flagship *El Real Felipe*, with her 114 guns; but, on the average, our ships, and especially our frigates, were larger than those of the combined foe, and altogether the difference was very considerably in our favour. It happened also that Matthews had received timely intelligence of M. de Court's movements, and had in consequence joined Lestock and taken the command, just before the French and Spaniards thus set sail to look for him. The enemy were scarcely clear of Toulon Roads when the two fleets met; and now at last the animosity subsisting between the British commanders developed itself to the professional ruin of one of them, and to the great injury of the King's service and the country. Nothing was done on the day when the hostile fleets first came in sight of each other. M. de Court's orders prevented him from declining a battle, while our superiority in numbers deterred him from inviting one; and Matthews wished the enemy to advance further into

the open sea before he attacked them, that he might have more room for manœuvres. The next morning, February 10th, the French were discovered at daybreak further from the land ; and Matthews, who during the past night had lain at anchor in the bay of Hières, made signal to form in line of battle and to close with the enemy.

Again, however, nothing was done. The wind was so variable, that while the English had an easterly breeze, the French had the wind from the north-west ; and Matthews was unable either to lessen the distance between him and the enemy, or to keep his own fleet in compact order. Lestock's squadron in particular had dropped far astern. It was said in the fleet that, on the preceding night, when the Rear-Admiral had gone on board the Commander-in-chief to receive his orders, Matthews renewed his old altercation with him, and with marked incivility desired him to return to his ship. The next day, the 11th, Lestock's division was still so far astern that M. de Court, while forbearing to invite a battle, now thought it unnecessary to avoid one ; and, though still standing under easy sail to the southward, formed a line of battle with the Spaniards in the rear, and prepared for action. Matthews, eager for a victory which he saw within his reach, at once bore after him, collecting round him all the ships that were near, and signalling to those in the rear to come up with all speed. Rear-Admiral Rowley, the third in command, repeated the signal and hastened to join his commander ; but Lestock neither repeated it nor showed the slightest intention of taking any part in the action, which presently raged with great fury. The battle began about one o'clock by Matthews, in the *Namur*, 90, engaging the huge flagship of the Spanish Admiral. He was nobly supported by Rowley in the *Barfleur*, 90 ; by the *Marlborough*, 90, whose captain, Cornwall, was killed ; and by the *Berwick*, 70, under the command of Captain Edward Hawke, who



first distinguished himself on this day, and who was destined hereafter to lead more than one fleet to victory, and to earn for himself a fame such as scarcely any of his predecessors had equalled ; and which even now very few on the glorious list of the British navy have surpassed. Hawke took the *Poder*, a Spanish 60-gun ship, thus making the only prize of the day ; our inferiority in the number of ships engaged (there were but fifteen English ships that fired a single gun) having in general converted the battle on our part into a struggle for safety rather than for victory. Matthews did make an attempt also to burn *El Felipe*, and sent a fireship on that errand ; but Don Navarro, the Spanish Admiral, perceived the design, and directed his broadside at her with such effect as to sink her before she could grapple him.

As evening approached, Matthews formed a fresh line of battle, in the hope of thus giving time for *Lestock* to join him. That officer, however, still hung back ; but the French squadron, of which also but a small portion had as yet been engaged, having now retraced its steps, was coming up in great force, and, for the short remaining period of daylight, a sharp skirmish ensued, in which the *Poder* was retaken ; but night soon separated the combatants. The brunt of the action had been confined to so small a number of our ships, that those which had been engaged were mostly in a very bad state. The *Marlborough* was little better than a wreck ; and the *Namur* was so much disabled, that Matthews shifted his flag to the *Russell*, 80, Captain Long, which, without any fault of her captain, had hitherto taken no part in the battle. On the morning of the 12th the combined fleets were seen standing to the south-west, as if making for the straits ; and Matthews made signal for the whole fleet to chase in line of battle. The enemy were in great disorder, having evidently suffered severely in the action

of the preceding day. Many of the Spanish vessels were seen to be dismasted, and *El Felipe* was so completely disabled that she was obliged to be taken in tow by one of her comrades. *Lestock*, however, still hung back ; and all that was done was to get sufficiently near the flying enemy to retake the *Poder*, which, however, its crew had already abandoned and set on fire. The early darkness of a winter evening stopped both the flight and the pursuit. But on the 13th affairs were altered : *Lestock* had by this time come up, and seemed as eager to fight as he had hitherto been backward. For an hour or two both our squadrons continued the chase in line of battle ; but there appears to have been some ambiguity in the signals made by *Matthews* : though the blame belongs to the Admiralty, not to the Admiral, since the signal which in the "Fighting Instructions" enjoined the formation of a line of battle had quite a different sense in the "Sailing Instructions," which were equally furnished to every ship in the service. We were gaining upon the enemy, who, however, were still some leagues ahead, when, at nine in the morning, *Matthews* discontinued the chase. Intelligence had reached him that the Spaniards were preparing to dispatch a considerable army to Italy : in his character of ambassador, he conceived it to be of the highest political importance to frustrate such a design ; a stern chase is usually a long chase ; and he had a fear, which was not perhaps wholly ill-founded, that, in the existing state of the wind, if he allowed himself to be driven down towards the entrance of the straits, he might find it impossible to regain the Italian coast in time to protect it from this threatened invasion.

The battle could not be termed a victory ; yet whatever advantage had been gained was indisputably on our side. We had captured the only ship that had been taken ; and more than one Spanish ship had sustained a loss in killed and wounded exceeding that of our whole

fleet. But Matthews was greatly chagrined, thinking that Lestock's contumacy, to give his conduct no harder name, had alone prevented him from achieving a triumph which would have encircled his name with lasting renown. He accordingly laid a formal accusation of him before the Admiralty; and Lestock recriminated on him, imputing the failure to achieve a decisive victory to the order given on the 13th to desist from the chase. It soon became evident that the whole affair was to be made a party question. Matthews was a member of Parliament, usually voting with the Opposition; and the authorities at the Admiralty were, in consequence, determined to crush him. Under their dictation the House of Commons, who had no right whatever to interfere in the matter, instituted an inquiry into the business. They examined Matthews and Lestock and other officers; and at last they presented an address to the King, to request him to order a court-martial to inquire into the conduct of the two Admirals and several other officers whom they named. The King complied with their request, and the result was a number of trials such as probably no other single transaction in the history of the world has given rise to. Four lieutenants and eleven captains, were successively prosecuted: some on charges brought against them by Lestock, some accused by Matthews, some impeached by their own officers. Some were convicted, but pardoned; some were cashiered, very few were acquitted: while the courts-martial themselves did not in every case escape the censure of the House of Commons, which still, against all precedent and against all law, continued its interference with their proceedings. It was about two years after the battle before the trial of Admiral Lestock commenced. The charges against him imputed to him neglect of the general rules of the service and disobedience of particular orders; and a minute detail of the events of the four days during which the hostile fleets were in sight of each other

was produced to prove them. It was certainly established that Matthews had commanded him to make sail and that he did not do so; that, though he saw his commander hotly and perilously engaged with the enemy, he held aloof till the last day: and in fact never fired a gun nor received a single shot. Nevertheless the court-martial pronounced that he had "refuted the whole" of the accusations brought against him, and "unanimously acquitted him."

Very different was the fate of the Admiral himself. He was accused by Lestock of having been the principal cause of the escape of the combined fleets; "of the miscarriage of His Majesty's fleet in the Mediterranean in the month of February, 1744," as it was called in the indictment. The deliberate unfairness of the whole proceeding was shown at the very outset by the fact of the court being composed of the very same officers who had tried Lestock, and who, by their verdict in that case, had manifestly prejudged Matthews. It is remarkable that among the members was Rear Admiral John Byng, who, but a few years afterwards, was destined to suffer himself by a perversion of justice almost equal to that to which he now allowed himself to be made a party. Walpole\* affirms that "besides some great errors in the forms, whenever the Admiralty perceived any of the court-martial inclined to favour Matthews, they were constantly changed." Matthews proved, as it was easy to prove, as indeed it was impossible to deny, that he had led the pursuit of the enemy, even while wholly unsupported by his accuser; that, though he had been often exposed to the fire of several of the Spanish ships at the same time, he had nevertheless almost disabled the far more powerful vessel of the Spanish Admiral; while the *Namur* had been so crippled by the superior fire of the enemy that he had been

\* Letter to Mann, Nov. 4th, 1746. Cunningham's ed. ii. 64.



forced to shift his flag to another ship. And he adduced reasons, which no one could deny to be weighty, to justify him in preferring a return towards Italy to a continued pursuit of an enemy whom it was possible he might fail to overtake. The trial lasted above four months ; and was terminated by the court deciding unanimously that Matthews, “ by divers breaches of duty,” was guilty of the charges alleged against him, and sentencing him to be cashiered and rendered incapable of any further employ in His Majesty’s service. The order to give over the chase on the morning of the 13th might have been an error of judgment, but hardly a breach of duty ; and an error of judgment might well be pardoned in a brave man, on whom, in his double character of admiral and ambassador, such extensive duties were imposed. It might well happen that what in a military point of view was most desirable, was not politically the most prudent course ; and, when one man had to decide on both these aspects of a case, it was difficult to blame, and scandalous to condemn him, even had he been proved to have mistakenly allowed the greater influence to the less weighty considerations. Lestock’s acquittal was, if possible, more shameful than Matthews’s conviction. That he had been guilty of the grossest neglect of duty and disobedience of orders ; that he had betrayed his commander, and endangered a large portion of the fleet by keeping aloof from the battle which was going on before his eyes ; and that he had thus, out of malice, deprived that commander of the opportunity of gaining a complete victory, was palpable and undeniable : and yet he was acquitted, while the officer whom he had betrayed was branded with a disgraceful conviction. Lestock had previously behaved with courage and energy in the West Indies ; nor did he subsequently display any want of bravery : so that his misconduct was probably caused by resentment at the ill-temper displayed towards him by the Admiral, and not by cowardice. That

Matthews's behaviour to him was discourteous, unmannerly, and almost insulting seems equally clear, but no breach of the rules of civility could excuse the flagrant disregard of the interests of the service and of his country of which Lestock was guilty. And, on the whole, the decisions of the two courts-martial are among the most discreditable events in the naval history of the 18th century.

Lestock was employed again immediately after the conclusion of his trial. The ministry projected a combined naval and military attack upon Port L'Orient, partly with the view of giving a check to the French India Company, which had its principal establishment at that place; and partly in the hope that Marshal Saxe, who was overwhelming our allies in Flanders by his superior numbers, might find it necessary to weaken his army there by detaching a division to the assistance of the Breton garrison. Accordingly a strong squadron of eight sail of the line, five frigates, and several bomb-vessels and fireships, was placed under Lestock's command; and a land-force of six regiments and two hundred artillerymen under that of General St. Clair. The expedition was perhaps not ill-conceived, but the whole of the details were so mismanaged that it could hardly escape failure. The commanders were not even furnished with any map of the country, nor with any plan of the place to be attacked. It was even said that the Duke of Newcastle, who had only discovered that Cape Breton was an island when it came into our possession, did not know the difference between Brittany and Gascony; and caused a map of the latter province to be supplied to the fleet to guide it to the attack of a town two hundred miles north of its frontier. The captain of the Engineers, too, was ill with the gout, and unable to superintend his works in person; and when the troops had landed, and erected batteries, it was found that they had only ammunition enough to keep up a fire for a single day. It was strange that we should have been even

near obtaining any success ; yet so imposing on their first landing did the English troops look, that the garrison, which was weak in number, and ignorant of our deficiencies, were at first dismayed, offered to treat, and would have surrendered the town, if the general would have granted them fair terms for themselves. When they found, however, that St. Clair insisted on their surrendering at discretion, they broke off the negociation, and, gathering courage from despair, made so vigorous a resistance, that both he and the Admiral soon found success hopeless with the scanty means at their disposal, and decided on retiring. Wishing to effect something, they next proceeded along the coast to Quiberon Bay ; but the weather became stormy, and drove some of the transports out to sea. And, when at last they arrived at Quiberon, they found nothing worthy of an attack that seemed at the same time to be accessible to one. They did, indeed, land some troops, and destroyed one or two insignificant forts, the largest of which did not contain a garrison of more than thirty men ; and at the end of October they returned to England, having certainly effected nothing at all proportioned to the expectations of the ministry, nor even to the real power of the force placed at their disposal.

Matthews's conduct immediately after the battle off Toulon proved that the reason which he alleged for halting in his pursuit of the combined fleets, was that which had really actuated him ; since, while he himself proceeded with the *Namur* and others of the ships that had been most shattered, to repair their damages at Minorca, he at once sent a strong squadron to the coast of Italy to prevent the arrival of any supplies or reinforcements for the Spanish army in Lombardy ; and, at the beginning of the summer he fell in with a flotilla of French transports, having a large body of troops on board, and drove the vessel on shore and destroyed them, though the men escaped. Captain Norris of the *Essex*, too, fell in with another squadron



laden with supplies of food and ammunition, of which he also destroyed the greater portion. In September, in consequence of the discussions which had taken place respecting the late events, Matthews was recalled, and relinquished his command to Admiral Rowley; but the general wisdom of his conduct is sufficiently illustrated by the fact that it was strictly imitated by Rowley, Admiral Medley, and Admiral Byng, who successively replaced him in that command; and the absence of any striking occurrences in the Mediterranean during the remainder of the war is to be ascribed to their adherence to the policy pursued by Matthews; which so nipped all the designs of France and Spain in the bud, that they never could attain a sufficient degree of ripeness to be blasted by any visible action.

Outside the Straits of Gibraltar, in the sea between that harbour and home, our navy suffered a great disaster, but one to which the enemy did not contribute. Admiral Rochambeau, after cruising for some time with fourteen sail of the line about the entrance to the Channel without any success, made his way down to the Tagus, where he blocked up a flotilla of storeships laden with supplies for our Mediterranean fleet. Rowley was known to be in urgent need of them; and accordingly, as soon as intelligence of Rochambeau's proceeding reached England, Admiral Balchen with a fleet equal to his, and an additional squadron of Dutch ships, was sent out to raise the blockade. The Frenchman retired at his approach, and Balchen, having liberated the storeships and escorted them to Gibraltar, set out to return to England. On the 3rd of October he encountered a storm of unusual violence: some of the ships lost their masts; some could only save themselves by the sacrifice of their guns, which were thrown overboard; some started such leaks that the utmost exertions of their crews could hardly keep them afloat till they reached Plymouth. The flagship, the



Victory, 110, which was looked on with admiration as the finest vessel in the service, if not in the world, was never seen again; she was believed to have struck on the Casketts, a ridge of rocks near Alderney, as repeated guns of distress were heard in the night by the inhabitants of the island. But the gale was too terrible for any assistance to be sent out; and she and her admiral, and above a thousand men, perished in the waters.

The next year, 1745, though one of the most remarkable in modern English history, owes its celebrity rather to the great rebellion in favour of the exiled Stuarts at home, than to any warlike achievement abroad. It afforded employment to many squadrons, which were kept cruising all round the island during the latter part of the year. Vernon commanded in the Downs. Admiral Byng had a squadron off the Scottish coast, and effectually prevented the arrival of the supplies from France on which the rebels greatly depended; but the only engagement that took place, was one which had nearly hindered the rebellion altogether. Prince Charles Edward himself had embarked at the mouth of the Loire in a small frigate, called *La Doutelle*, under the protection of a larger vessel, the *Elizabeth*, 64; but he had hardly been two days at sea, and was not yet out of sight of the French coast, when he fell in with the *Lion*, 58, commanded by Captain Brett, who had been Anson's first-lieutenant in the *Centurion*, and on his return had been promoted for his admirable behaviour in that expedition. Brett at once attacked the *Elizabeth*, in spite of the inferiority of his force. The action lasted five hours; at the expiration of which, the *Elizabeth*, having lost above two hundred men and having received great damage in her hull, abandoned the prosecution of her voyage and made sail for Belleisle, which she reached in safety. The *Doutelle*, which, after firing a few guns at the *Lion* at the commencement, had taken no part in the action, crowded all sail, and pro-

ceeded on her way. Brett himself had lost above a hundred and fifty men; and his rigging had been so completely cut to pieces, that he was unable to pursue either of them: nor was he aware of the greatness of the prize which the *Doutelle* had on board. It would have been happy for the Prince and his friends in these islands had she been driven back with her consort, or even been captured by the *Lion*; but the little vessel met with no further molestation, and on the 25th of July landed him safely at Moidart, in the Western Highlands, to witness with bitter anguish the final extinction of the hopes of his family and the overthrow and ruin of all his adherents; the severity of whose sufferings and the completeness of whose destruction was in exact proportion to the greatness of their exertions in his cause and the constancy of their fidelity.

In the same year an event occurred on the distant coast of Asia which marks an important era in our naval history. On the 25th of January, the first action took place that was ever fought between French and English ships in the Indian seas: it was the beginning of the great contest for the sovereignty of the East, which lasted for half a century, and ended in the almost entire expulsion of our rivals, and in the establishment of our own vast and still increasing dominion. Commodore Barnet had been sent, at the request of the East India Company, with a small squadron of four ships, to the East, to protect our trade in that quarter. With the object of intercepting the French China fleet, he divided his force: sending the *Medway*, 60, and *Diamond*, 20, to the coast of Malacca; while, with his own ship the *Deptford*, 60, and the *Preston*, 50, under the command of Lord Northesk, he proceeded to the straits of Banca, between that island and the eastern coast of Sumatra. There he hoisted Dutch colours, and waited for the enemy: and he had not waited long before three French ships, each carrying thirty guns

and laden with valuable cargoes, came in sight. A smart action ensued, and the French fought gallantly ; but at last they were all taken. And almost at the same time the *Medway* and *Diamond* took two other vessels, one of which had come from *Manilla* with a freight of enormous value. *Barnet* would now gladly have gone still further to the east, to intercept the yearly galleon from *Acapulco*, the fellow of which *Anson* had captured three years before ; and indeed he had received a dispatch from *England* urging him to make the attempt ; but at the same time there came also a pressing entreaty to him from the authorities at *Madras* to repair thither : and, preferring the interest of the country to his own private gain, he quickly decided on complying with their request, and set sail for the *Coromandel* coast.

It was no imaginary danger that threatened *Madras*. *Admiral Labourdonnais*, than whom *France* has had few officers better able both to plan and to execute conquest, was diligently employed at the *Mauritius*, of which island he was governor, in fitting out a squadron with which he expected to be able to drive *Barnet* from the *Indian* seas, and then to make an easy prey of the *British* trading-vessels and settlements. He was aware that, shortly after the successes which we have mentioned, the *Commodore* had found the *Deptford* and the *Diamond* in too bad a condition to keep the sea, and had consequently sent them home : but he was not aware that he had been reinforced by two ships of the line and a frigate, and that he had also added one of the prizes to his squadron, so that, at the commencement of 1746, he was stronger than he had been in the preceding year. *Labourdonnais* therefore, at the beginning of spring, quitted the *Mauritius* for *Hindustan* ; and, though he received severe damage from a heavy gale which he encountered soon after his departure, he refitted his ships at *Madagascar*, and proceeded confidently on his way. Had *Barnet*

still been alive, he would have been hastening to his destruction ; but that able officer had died in the preceding winter, and had been succeeded in his command by Captain Peyton of the *Medway*, who proved utterly unworthy to command even the meanest ship in the British navy. He was cruising with his six ships off the north of Ceylon, when, towards the end of June, *Labourdonnais* came in sight. The French had eight ships, carrying in all a hundred and thirty more guns than the English ; but seven of the ships had been originally built only for the merchant-service, and the guns were generally of a calibre greatly inferior to ours. In spite of the apparent numerical superiority of the French we had a material advantage in every point calculated to determine the result of a battle ; but Peyton had not courage to engage in a battle. His ships were the better sailers, and, availing himself of this quality, he avoided coming to close quarters with the enemy, and contented himself with a cannonade ; and the next day he actually fled to *Trincomalee*, leaving *Labourdonnais* master of the field. Had he not fled, the Frenchman must have retreated ; for he had expended nearly all his ammunition, was in great want of provisions, and some of his squadron were so strained and leaky as to be quite unfit for a fresh action without considerable repair. *Labourdonnais*, however, being thus freed from farther apprehension by Peyton's flight, proceeded leisurely to *Pondicherry*, refitted his ships and supplied them with heavier guns. At the beginning of August he once more came in sight of Peyton, who again fled before him ; and then he proceeded to lay siege to *Madras*, which, being in no condition to resist, and being deprived of all hope of success from the fleet, surrendered at almost the first summons. Had *Labourdonnais* been left uncontrolled to execute the plans which he had formed, he might perhaps have succeeded in his project of extinguishing



the British power in India ; but fortunately for us, Dupleix, the Governor of Pondicherry, who was likewise a man of eminent statesmanlike capacity and great ambition, conceived a jealousy of exploits which he affirmed to have unduly encroached upon his own province. And the animosity which in consequence arose between him and the Admiral checked the progress of the French arms. Labourdonnais returned to the Mauritius, and, before the end of the year, Peyton was superseded in the command which he had disgraced : Commodore Griffin came out from England with a squadron which raised our force to eleven well-appointed ships, and turned the tables on the French, blockading Dupleix himself in Pondicherry, capturing several French ships, and completely re-establishing our naval superiority in those waters.

If we sustained a temporary loss in Asia, we at almost the same time made an acquisition, which eventually became a permanent one, in America ; where Commodore Warren, having been sent with a small squadron against Louisburg on Cape Breton, captured that town and the whole island with but little loss, and afterwards made prize of a great number of vessels belonging to the enemy, which sailed into the harbour without suspecting that it had changed masters, till they found themselves taken, as it were, in a net. The next year, 1746, the French made a strenuous effort to recover so important a settlement ; but the fleet which they sent out with that object met with nothing but disasters. Its commander, the Duke d'Anville, died of apoplexy. His successor, M. de Tourmelle, finding us too well-prepared to afford him any hope of success, killed himself ; and the fleet returning to Europe without a commander, lost several of its ships, which straggled from the main body and fell in with our cruisers before they regained their native harbours.

It was not, however, in such distant countries that the

war was to be decided; the blows that should tell on the final issue of the contest were required to be struck nearer home. At the beginning of 1747, it became known that the French were preparing to make another effort to recover Cape Breton, by sending out a fresh squadron to North America. A second was fitted out to go to the aid of Dupleix; and the intention was, that for their greater security, the two should keep each other company till they got beyond the bounds of Europe. Instead of waiting for their arrival in those distant regions, we determined to intercept them in Europe; and Anson, who had been made an admiral shortly after his return in 1744, but who, since that time, had been chiefly employed at the Board of Admiralty, now assumed the command of a splendid fleet of fourteen sail of the line, with Warren, who on his return from America, had been deservedly promoted to the rank of rear-admiral, for his second in command. Proceeding to Cape Finisterre, he cruised off that coast in the hope of falling in with the hostile fleets before they separated. His wish was gratified. On the 3rd of May the two squadrons, still in company, came in sight: in appearance greatly outnumbering the force under his command, but in real strength not superior, since the larger half of the French fleet consisted of merchant ships, which, though armed for self-defence, were no match for British vessels that had been built for war. They endeavoured to escape by dividing; but Anson, without staying to form a line of battle, gave chase with his whole force, and soon overtook them. It must have been gratifying to his feelings that his old ship, the *Centurion*, was the first to come up with the enemy. A warm action ensued, which resulted in the capture of six of the French ships of war, including the commanders of both the American and Indian squadrons, M. de la Jonquierre and M. de St. George, and four of the finest of their merchantmen. The money found on board the prizes amounted to a large sum; and the blow

thus dealt to the enemy in both the east and the west was of great importance. The King himself was so pleased that he thanked Anson publicly for his victory, and shortly afterwards raised him to the peerage.

A few weeks afterwards the French sustained an almost equal loss on nearly the same spot ; when Commodore Fox, with a squadron of six ships and a frigate, fell in with M. Bois de la Mothe, who, with three sail of the line and a frigate, was conveying home an enormous merchant-fleet from the West Indies. Fox put the ships of war to flight, and captured nearly fifty of their convoy. And before the winter Hawke dealt them a heavier blow still. We have seen already how he distinguished himself as captain of the *Berwick*. He had since been raised to the rank of rear-admiral, and he was now making his first cruise in the enjoyment of an independent command. His fleet consisted of fourteen ships of the line (of which, however, only one carried as many as seventy guns, the majority had sixty, and some as few as fifty,) and one or two frigates. His own flag flew on board the *Devonshire*, 66. With this force he sailed down towards the Bay of Biscay, to intercept a great mercantile flotilla which was known to be preparing in the French harbours for the West Indies, under the escort of a competent squadron of men-of-war. On the 14th of October he fell in with them, a few degrees to the south-west of Brest : they seemed an almost countless host, and it was afterwards ascertained that they amounted to no fewer than two hundred and fifty-two merchantmen, under the escort of nine ships of the line and several frigates. Hawke instantly made the signal to chase in line of battle. The French Admiral, M. de l'Etendear, on his part, ordered the merchantmen to hasten on their way under the protection of the frigates and the smallest of the line-of-battle ships ; and the better to secure their escape, with the rest he halted and faced his antagonist. In numbers he was



greatly inferior ; but the greater size of his ships in some degree equalised the contest, as his flagship, *Le Tonnant*, carried eighty guns, three more were seventy-fours, larger than the largest of Hawke's ; nor had he one so small as to carry only fifty guns. The wind blowing from the westward gave him also the weather-gage, of which he availed himself with considerable skill. The battle began a little before noon. Hawke had altered his signal to one for a general chase ; and the *Lion*, Captain Scott, and the *Princess Louisa*, Captain Watson, being the best sailers in the fleet, were the first ships engaged. They passed by the rearmost ships of the enemy, receiving a heavy fire without returning it, till they came to those in the van, when they also opened their fire, and, as their comrades were not far behind them, the battle soon became general. Hawke himself, as he came on, was aimed at by several of the French ships, but he too withheld his fire till he came to close quarters. He then attacked the *Severn*, captured her, and, leaving her to be taken possession of by the frigates, pushed on to aid Captain Rodney in the *Eagle*, who, with Captain Cotes in the *Edinburgh*, was almost overpowered by the heavier fire of the *Tonnant* and the *Intrepide*, 74. The *Eagle*, in particular, was almost unmanageable, her wheel being shot away : and, as the *Devonshire* came up to her assistance, she fell on board her, and for some time greatly hampered her in her efforts to direct her fire upon the French flagship. It happened also that while the two ships were thus entangled the breechings of the lower guns of the *Devonshire* broke, and thus she was for a short time reduced to inactivity, and was exposed to a heavy fire from the *Tonnant* which she could not return, till Captain Harland, of the *Tilbury*, perceiving the critical state of his commander, gallantly came to his rescue, tacking and standing in between him and the *Tonnant*, and fully occupying the attention of the latter by the vigour of his own attack. The *Devonshire* now forged



ahead, refitted the seisings of her guns, and then, returning to the charge, attacked the Trident, 64, silenced her, and passing on to the Terrible, 74, took her also. Captain Saunders in the Yarmouth took the Neptune, 70. The Monarch and the Fougueux had also struck; and by five o'clock the whole of the French fleet was in our possession, except the Tonnant and Intrepide, who, finding further resistance hopeless, now set all sail and endeavoured to escape. The Yarmouth was the nearest to them as they fled, and Captain Saunders, proposed to Captain Saumarez of the Nottingham, and to Rodney, who by this time had repaired his damages, to join him in pursuit of them. They gladly agreed, overtook the Frenchmen, and renewed the action for nearly an hour; when Captain Saumarez was killed, and, the Nottingham hauling her wind, the enemy profited by the respite thus given them, and by the rapidly increasing darkness of night, to make their escape. Nothing more could be done that night; and the next morning Hawke decided that the merchantmen were too far advanced to make it possible for him to pursue them with any chance of success, especially as his fastest ships were the most disabled from having sustained the chief weight of the late battle. He accordingly returned home with his prizes; while the Tonnant and the Intrepide, on finding they were not pursued further, presently doubled back to their own coast, and regained Brest: M. de l'Etendeur having, indeed, lost most of his fleet, but having deservedly obtained great honour by the gallantry of the struggle which he had maintained. It was an unpleasant conclusion to this victory that Hawke was so dissatisfied with the conduct of one of his captains, that he brought him before a court-martial; and it was very remarkable that this captain was Fox of the Kent, the same officer who, in the early part of the summer, had so greatly distinguished himself in the attack upon the West Indian

fleet. It was proved that he disobeyed one of Hawke's signals : but it was also proved that he had done so with reluctance, being misled as to its meaning by the positive assertions of his master and his first-lieutenant. It was also proved that he had taken the Fougueux single-handed, and that the Kent had been greatly crippled by the severity of the enemy's fire. The Court acquitted him of cowardice, a charge which clearly did not attach to him ; but sentenced him to be dismissed from his ship for deferring to the advice of his officers, instead of relying on his own judgment. Self-reliance is so indispensable a quality in a commander, that the sentence, though incurred by a generally good officer, was not undeserved ; and the court-martial deserves commendation for the example it set of candid discrimination and moderate timely severity.

All the belligerents were now nearly weary of the war ; and, at the beginning of 1748, negotiations were opened at Aix-la-Chapelle which soon led to the conclusion of peace. While they were proceeding, no fleets issued from any of the Spanish or French harbours in Europe, so that even Hawke could effect nothing. Our cruisers and privateers met, indeed, with even more than their usual success in single actions ; but advantages of such a kind, however profitable to individual commanders, have but little influence on the result of a war. And the only enterprises that could have been expected to affect that were not undertaken till after peace had been signed, though the officers concerned were ignorant of such an occurrence having taken place. One such was attempted in the East, another in the West Indies. In the East, Admiral Boscawen, who had been sent out to succeed Admiral Griffin in the command in India, and who, in addition to his ships, had been furnished with a strong body of troops, on his way out made an attempt to surprise the Mauritius. The attempt, which in fact was hardly more than a reconnaissance, failed ; in no small degree because the East

India Company, who had undertaken to supply him with detailed information respecting the island and its resources, wholly neglected to do so. And, as he did not conceive himself warranted in spending much time there he abandoned his designs against it, and proceeded with all speed to India. On his arrival off the Coromandel coast he was further reinforced by the squadron which Griffin made over to him, and also by an additional body of British infantry and sepoys in the service of the Company. He was now at the head of a fleet of ten ships of the line and one or two frigates, and of an army of nearly five thousand men. And with this force, which equalled or surpassed anything that India had yet seen of European troops, he at once undertook the siege of Pondicherry. Had his design been kept secret, it would in all probability have succeeded ; but Dupleix was forewarned and forearmed, and was also endowed with a genius admirably fitted for such an emergency. Boscawen quitted his ship, delegating the command of the fleet to Captain Lisle, and himself took the command of the land-forces. He was perplexed by the same want of information which had been the principal cause of his failure at the Mauritius. But still for a long time he persevered, trusting to the resolution of his men, and to his own fertility of resource, to overcome all difficulties. There was a strong fort, Ariancopang, barring his way before he could reach Pondicherry ; he took that, but Dupleix had fortified it so strongly that it delayed him full three weeks. And when at last he arrived before Pondicherry, there were only seven weeks left before the rainy season, which would render all military operations impracticable. Dupleix had made the most of every hour ; and when Boscawen reached Pondicherry he found its fortifications in perfect order, its garrison numerous, and amply supplied. In vain he brought up the fleet under the walls ; erected batteries, and bombarded the city by sea and land.

The resistance of the enemy was as gallant as his own attack. Once they made a sally which promised to bring the siege to an instant termination, and would have done so had it not been for the courage and genius of a young ensign, whose great subsequent renown still rings throughout the East as the real founder of our Indian empire. The garrison were driving the besiegers from their intrenchments, when Ensign Clive rallied a few men, poured in a deadly fire on the French troops, whom the surprise of such a sudden resistance, when all seemed their own, overwhelmed with a panic; repeated his fire, and drove them back in confusion within their walls.

Still the resources of the garrison exceeded those of the besiegers. They strengthened their old batteries, raised new ones; and the seven weeks passed, leaving them still masters of the beleaguered city. Disease, too, which was very fatal to men unused to the Indian climate, had thinned the British ranks sadly. And at last, on the 30th of September, when the rains had already begun, Boscawen wisely, but most unwillingly, raised the siege. Shortly after, news that peace had been signed in the preceding April reached India; so that he had the consolation of knowing that, even if he had taken Pondicherry, he would have been bound to restore it under the provisions of the treaty.

In the West Indies Rear-Admiral Knowles, with a squadron of seven ships, failed in an attempt on Santiago de Cuba, which was thus proved to be, as had often been asserted, almost impregnable: but he indemnified himself for his disappointment by making himself master of Port Louis, in Hispaniola; where all the ships in the harbour also fell into his hands. The capture of this place was a heavy blow to the French, to whom it belonged; and Knowles would have gained great credit for this success, had not Fortune presently thrown in his way the opportunity of reaping a still greater triumph; of which he



made such meagre use, that his enemies, and he had many, were not without plausible reasons for attributing his success at Port Louis more to luck than to skill. Captain Holmes was convoying a flotilla of merchantmen to England when, near the Gulf of Florida, he fell in with a Spanish squadron. It was dusk : Holmes, with great judgment, bade the merchantmen press on their course with all speed, while he himself returned to seek for Knowles, and guide him to the place where the Spaniards had been seen. Knowles, who was as brave a man as any in the service, received the news with delight ; at once went in search of them, and found them. In number they were exactly equal to his own fleet ; and they had only fourteen guns more, though they considerably outnumbered him in men. The Spaniards fought with great courage and resolution : though they were greatly dismayed by a new implement of destruction called a Cohorn shell, with which the British ships were provided, and with which they more than once set their antagonists on fire. The battle took place on the 1st of October, and lasted the whole day. We took one ship, the *Conquestadore*, and separated another, the *Africa*, from the rest of her comrades. A day or two afterwards, when she was again overtaken by our fleet, her own crew blew her up to save her from falling into our hands.

There was a general impression on board the British fleet, that with a more skilful commander (a more fearless one there could not be) the whole of the Spanish fleet must have been taken. And apparently Knowles himself was not quite satisfied with his achievement, for he began to quarrel with his officers ; brought two of his captains to a court-martial, by which they were honourably acquitted ; and then they retaliated by impeaching him : chiefly on the ground that after his flagship, the *Cornwall*, was disabled (as she had been), he ought to have shifted his flag into some other vessel. The Court found

him guilty of negligence, and sentenced him to be reprimanded. Except in the case of Sir Robert Calder, half a century later, there is no other instance of a victorious admiral being subjected to such an ordeal; and Knowles probably owed his exposure to it quite as much to his morose and quarrelsome temper as to any of his errors of conduct, which his success, partial as it was, and the fact of peace having been concluded before the action was fought, would otherwise, in all likelihood, have caused to be overlooked.

## CHAPTER XI.

1749 — 1759.

Instability of the peace — Squadrons sent to the West and East Indies — Braddock's expedition — A French squadron off Newfoundland — Slight action — Capture of the *Alcide* and *Lys* — Admiral Byng sent to Minorca — War with France — Siege of Minorca — Indecisive action — Byng retires to Gibraltar — Reduction of Minorca by the French — Trial, condemnation, and execution of Byng — Hawke's activity in the Mediterranean — Admiral Holbourne declines attacking the French at Louisburg — The expedition against Rochefort — Affairs of India — Watson and Clive reduce Gheriah — Retake Calcutta — Take Hooghly — Chandernagore — Co-operation of the sailors with the troops — Admiral Pocock fights three battles with the French — Capture of Cape Breton, Quebec, and Goree.

THE peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was far from establishing any cordiality between Great Britain and her former enemies. The ministry did indeed, in spite of Pitt's opposition, disband some regiments, and reduce the naval force, but still they kept on their guard; while the French, if afraid openly to provoke hostilities, repeatedly showed themselves willing to strike, and even to make opportunities for striking. They believed that the cause of the Pretender was not yet desperate; and in the second year of the peace the Pretender himself visited London, to consult his adherents on the practicability of a fresh invasion of England, in which not only the French, but perhaps the Prussians also would have co-operated. Unfriendly discussions also arose between us and the French court on the subject of our respective frontiers in North America, where their province of Canada bordered on our settlement of Nova Scotia, but where the precise boundaries of the two states had never been marked out nor ascertained. From the first it was evident that war

would soon be renewed ; and, as it seemed likely that North America would both afford the pretext for it, and be the scene of the first struggles, care was taken to keep a strong squadron in those waters ; and to place it under the command of the best officers who could be spared from Europe. On the other side of the world similar jealousies irritated the East India Companies of the two nations. Dupleix was still continuing his intrigues with the native princes, and furnished many of those who were disposed to be hostile to us with French officers to drill and command their troops. Our Government, too, fully appreciating the rising importance of the trade with Asia, listened favourably to the request of our Company, and sent a squadron of six ships to that region also, under the command of Admiral Watson ; who, though he too soon fell a victim to the climate, had found time, before his untimely death, to display a courage and ability which promised to place him among the foremost officers in his profession.

Twelve years before, Horace Walpole had complained of the difficulty of arriving at a correct knowledge of our real position. We had, he said, a nominal war with Spain without the reality. We had a real war with France, though both countries professed to be at peace ; and now, at the beginning of 1755, both Governments used hostile language, and issued hostile orders respecting the other, above a year before either committed itself to a declaration of war. The events of the year were not indeed very important, and they were confined to the North American station : but they were quite sufficient to establish the fact of a real war again existing between us and France. We sent General Braddock with a small force to Virginia : Braddock was defeated and slain on the Ohio ; but, before the intelligence of this event had reached Europe, the French despatched a much stronger



force to the same region, under the escort of M. Bois de la Mothe, and a fine fleet of sixteen sail. To oppose this armament we also sent out two more regiments, and a fleet of eleven sail of the line under Admiral Boscawen ; to which a reinforcement of six more, under Admiral Holbourne, was shortly afterwards added. Boscawen, though he quitted England several days after the French had sailed from Brest, was the first to reach Newfoundland, where he touched ; and, hearing that the Brest fleet had not yet been seen, he took his station off Cape Race to intercept it on its arrival. He had not long to wait. He had only quitted England on April 27th, and on the 6th of June the advanced squadron of M. Bois de la Mothe was seen advancing. It was afterwards lost sight of in the fogs to which that part of the world is particularly liable, and which seem to have been unusually frequent that season. They had more than once caused Boscawen's fleet to straggle, and so it happened now that on the morning of the 9th, two of the ships, the Dunkirk, 60, and the Defiance, 60, found themselves several miles from their main body, and close to two of the French fleet, the Alcide and the Lys, both of sixty-four guns. The Defiance was commanded by Captain Andrews ; the Dunkirk by an officer whose name afterwards became widely celebrated, Captain Howe. He was the senior officer, and on him therefore the conduct of the short discussion with the French captains devolved. He summoned the captain of the Alcide to shorten sail. M. Houquart replied by the natural inquiry, whether there was peace or war between the two fleets. Howe replied that the Frenchman must accompany him to the Admiral for an answer, but that he advised him to be prepared for war. He had some reason for the last part of his answer, since the orders under which Boscawen sailed enjoined him to attack the French wherever he met them ; and now,

while they were still parleying, the Admiral commanded him by signal to attack. He at once opened his fire on the Alcide; the Defiance followed his example with the Lys, which latter ship had not all her guns on board, but had had several removed to make room for a regiment of soldiers, and presently both the French ships struck.\* This, however, was the only instance of any collision between the rival fleets. Two or three times the French escaped us in consequence of the fogs; once through the skill and hardihood of their admiral, who ventured to thread his way through the Straits of Belleisle, which were not previously believed to be passable by ships of the line. A small detached squadron did indeed co-operate in the reduction of the French forts in Nova Scotia; but before the end of the year both the rival admirals returned to Europe. No fresh fleets were sent out to that station for some time, and the year 1756 passed off without any event of consequence to mark it in North America.

This tranquillity there was chiefly caused by the concentration of the efforts of the French on one single object, the conquest of Minorca. For that they made vast preparations at Toulon during the whole winter, and had further the address to lead our Government to believe that these preparations (which could not be kept secret) were designed for North America. It was not till February, 1756, that the ministers received certain information, which they could no longer disregard, that Minorca was their aim. On this they hastened the equipment of a fleet of ten sail of the line, of which, on the 1st of April, they gave the command to Admiral Byng, enjoining him to repair to Gibraltar; and to inquire there whether the Toulon fleet had passed the Straits. In that case he was to detach his second in command, Admiral West, with a portion of the fleet to North America; but, if the French were still in the

\* See in the Appendix an interesting account of this transaction from the pen of Admiral Boscawen himself.

Mediterranean, then he was "to go on without a moment's loss of time to Minorca." If the French were not there, he was to proceed to Toulon and to endeavour to blockade them in that port, and to use all diligence to protect both Minorca and Gibraltar.

It was with no great alacrity that Byng sailed on this duty with the force which had been assigned to him. He complained that it was quite inadequate to the service expected of it; the ships were foul, the crews very weak in number, and still weaker in health; and he had no marines whatever, that portion of his complement having been removed to make room for a regiment which he took out with him, and for another which he was to receive on board at Gibraltar, and to convey to Port Mahon. He sailed, however, on the 7th of April, and reached Gibraltar May 2nd; where his discontent was increased by finding the magazines there wholly unprovided with the stores which he expected to find, and of which he was in great want; and by the refusal of General Fowke, the governor, to spare from his garrison the regiment which Byng's orders had enjoined him to take. At the same time he fell in with Captain Edgecumbe of the *Lancaster*, who reported that he had been driven from Minorca a fortnight before by M. de la Galissonière and a French fleet of twelve sail of the line, conveying sixteen thousand men under the Duke de Richelieu to the attack of Port Mahon; and the army had been disembarked, and had instantly commenced the siege. Byng at once communicated these tidings to the authorities at home, and the plainness with which he again complained of the general deficiencies in the equipment of his fleet, which had caused the officers at Gibraltar to coincide with him in despairing of the possibility of saving Minorca, gave great offence, and perhaps contributed in some degree to his subsequent unhappy fate. He remained at Gibraltar till the 8th, strengthening his fleet and furnishing it for the coming battle in the best



manner that the stores in the arsenal would permit, and then sailed for Minorca, and arrived in sight of that island on the 19th. If his means to relieve it were scanty, the resources which the island itself contained for self-defence were equally so. Minorca possesses no great natural strength; it presents no rugged precipices and foaming breakers, to dismay the invader: on the contrary, in most parts a hospitable coast gently sloping to the sea offers unusual facilities for landing at almost any point. But the chief town, Port Mahon, was protected by the castle of St. Philip, which was a fortress of the first class, equal in strength to the most celebrated strongholds on the Continent. An energetic governor, with a sufficient and well-supplied garrison, might have held it long enough to enable England to secure its safety by effectual succour. But at this crisis the garrison amounted to less than three thousand men; the governor, and a large proportion of the officers were absent on leave; and the deputy-governor, on whom the defence of the place devolved, was General Blakeney, a veteran who had won renown in times past by his skill and courage, but who was now eighty-two years old, and wholly unfit for a duty which would have tasked all the energies of his youth. Against St. Philip's Richelieu directed his whole force; but, when Byng arrived, he had made but little progress: none that offered any hindrance to a free communication between the fleet and the garrison. Blakeney had sunk some vessels in the entrance to the harbour, thus keeping the French fleet at a distance at which its guns could not annoy the garrison; but still it was clear that, for the safety of the town, it was indispensable to drive that fleet away: while, if that were effected, the tables would be turned on the army, which, instead of besieging, might itself become besieged. Byng therefore prepared for a battle; and on the morning of the 20th bore down on the enemy. It was no very unequal combat: in the number



of ships and of guns the difference was as trifling as could be conceived, though what difference there was, was in favour of the enemy; each had twelve ships of the line and five frigates, and the guns of the French numbered only twenty-four more than ours. In men, indeed, they had a great superiority: the British did not amount to seven thousand, while the French exceeded them by above two thousand six hundred. Still, though such a preponderance is far from unimportant, it is nowhere of so little weight as on board ship; and there certainly was nothing in the force of the antagonist fleets which should have led Byng to distrust the fortune of his country; the preliminary manœuvres had been all in his favour; he had obtained and kept the weather-gage, and had taken one vessel with three hundred soldiers on board, which Richelieu had sent to his brother commander to strengthen the fleet.

The battle was begun by Admiral West. At two in the afternoon, Byng signalled to bear away two points from the wind and engage; but West, who was too far off to obey both these orders, wisely and bravely decided that the latter was the more pressing. He accordingly bore away seven points, and fell upon the enemy with his whole division. In a very short time he had obtained a decided advantage; had driven one of the enemy's ships out of the line of battle, thus throwing their whole line into confusion; and there seemed for a moment every prospect of our gaining a decisive victory. Byng, who, from the position of the two fleets, was necessarily longer in coming into action than West, was pressing onwards to take his share, when his evil star prevailed, and the accidents of battle threw hindrances in his way, which were either insurmountable in their own nature, or which he had not genius, or, at the moment, not energy enough to surmount. One of West's squadron, the *Intrepid*, had her topmast shot away, which got so entangled with

the rest of her rigging, that she presently became unmanageable ; she “drove on the ship next to her,”\* and the leading ships of Byng’s division, including the Admiral’s flagship, the *Ramillies*, were obliged to back their sails to avoid falling foul of one another. Byng promptly signalled to those in his rear to pass him and continue the attack ; but the disorder which this accident had engendered caused considerable delay, of which M. de la Galissonnière was glad to avail himself. He began to draw off ; and his ships, being all clean, were so much faster than ours, that he had it completely in his power to continue or to discontinue the action. It was soon seen that he did not mean to fight any longer ; and Byng, thinking that he would probably renew the combat in the morning, gladly lay to, to repair damages : three of his ships, the *Intrepid*, *Captain*, and *Defiance* having been so much injured, that, without some repair they could not be fit for a fresh struggle. At daybreak he called a council of war to decide on what was to be done ; whether he should pursue the enemy, and again bring them to action, or whether he should give up all hope of saving Minorca, and retire to protect Gibraltar. The Council decided that, even if the French fleet were away, Byng would be unable to relieve Minorca, that any accident to his fleet would endanger Gibraltar, and, consequently, that his duty required him to retire thither while his strength was unimpaired. The grounds of this strange opinion are not very intelligible ; but it was unanimously adopted, and Minorca was left to its fate. Even when thus deprived of all hope of succour, Blakeney held out for four weeks, and only surrendered on the 29th of June, obtaining the most honorable terms in acknowledgment of his gallant resistance.

Byng did not reach Gibraltar till the 19th of June, when

\* See Byng’s despatch, dated May 25.



he found five ships of the line waiting for him, which Commodore Brodrick had brought out as a reinforcement to counterbalance one which, according to advices received by the Admiralty, the French were preparing at Toulon for M. de la Galissonnière. Thus strengthened, the Admiral resolved to return to Minorca, in order again to fight De la Galissonnière, and to make one more effort for the relief of the island, which he now thought might be in his power. He could hardly in any case have succeeded, since the island, as we have seen, surrendered in ten days after his arrival at Gibraltar. But he was (perhaps unavoidably) so dilatory in his proceedings, that the 3rd of July found him still in the bay; and that day brought Hawke and Admiral Saunders to supersede him and West, with whom at first the Admiralty and the nation were equally displeased: though afterwards, when the conduct of West on the 20th was more fully understood, he was restored to favour, and contrasted with his commander, on whom the wrath of the country was poured with daily increasing vehemence.

The general indignation, indeed, of the whole people, is described by contemporary writers as unparalleled. It seems to have begun with the highest ranks, the King and the Duke of Cumberland vying with one another in the contest who could say the bitterest things of the Admiral; and it quickly spread to the mob, who burnt him in effigy in the streets; and attacked, and were with difficulty prevented from destroying his country seat in Hertfordshire. The ministers themselves, in the opinion of the few who preserved their calmness of judgment, were interested in directing the public anger against Byng, in order to divert it from their own mismanagement, which, even if it had not been the real cause of Byng's conduct, had at least furnished him with the plea by which he justified it; and their behaviour in the matter certainly justified this view. They actually garbled the despatch in which the Admiral



related the circumstances of the battle, and explained the reasons of his retreat to Gibraltar : suppressing many circumstances that were in his favour, and in some instances, by crafty omissions, entirely altering his meaning. And when by these arts they had excited a feeling against him, they stimulated it further by promising it the gratification of revenge. A deputation from the Common Council waited on the Prime Minister, the Duke of Newcastle, to demand the impeachment of the Admiral. The Duke bade them make themselves easy. "He should be tried directly : he should be hanged immediately." The fulfilment of this dignified promise did not eventually rest with the speaker, since he was soon afterwards driven from office ; but the affair proceeded as if it had been still under the management of his presiding genius.

In the winter Byng was put on his trial for his conduct during the battle, and for his retreat to Gibraltar, and the consequent loss of Minorca. That he should be so tried was inevitable, and proper. But already the public feeling had begun to suffer a revulsion. He had found time to publish a full statement of his case ; of the details, and causes, and motives of his conduct ; of the bad condition of his fleet, of his remonstrances to the Admiralty, and of the flagrant way in which his despatch had been tampered with. The instinctive innate British love of fair play had made this last circumstance tell greatly in his favour ; and, before the trial began, and still more as it proceeded, there was a general belief and hope that he would be honourably acquitted, in spite of the violence of the adherents of the late ministry, who openly treated the trial as a party question, boasted that they "had a majority, and that Byng would be condemned."\* He made a

\* Walpole attributes this expression to Admiral Boscawen ; but he is clearly mistaken on this point, as Boscawen's letters, many of which refer to the subject, display a very different feeling : though he certainly thought the



straightforward defence, in no degree endeavouring to blink the real question, but affirming that he had been sent out too late ; that, though, if he had arrived at Minorca before the French had landed, he could have prevented their landing, yet, reaching it when he did, he was unable to beat the French fleet, and still more to distress or to cause the withdrawal of their army ; while if, on a renewal of the battle, he had been defeated, “Gibraltar must have been exposed to the hazard of a sudden siege, without a single ship to defend it.” And he appealed to his instructions to show that the Admiralty had by no means designed to make a battle with the enemy’s fleet a paramount article of his duty. In spite of the boast of Newcastle’s partisans, the court-martial was not very unevenly divided : a majority, indeed, were adverse to the prisoner ; but even they had been so strongly impressed by his argument, by the undeniable proofs which established many of his most important assertions of fact, and by the evidence borne by every witness who had seen him during the action, to his personal courage and coolness, that, though resolved to convict him, they became desirous to convict him of a slight offence and to adjudge a mild punishment. They found a difficulty in their way. Formerly the Articles of War had left it to the discretion of such a court to inflict whatever punishment it thought proper ; but within the last year or two that clause had been altered, and the 12th Article of War declared that “Every person who, through cowardice, negligence, or disaffection, should . . . not do his utmost to take and destroy every ship which it shall be his duty to engage . . . shall suffer death.” They recoiled from pronouncing a verdict which should necessitate such

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loss of Minorca disgraceful to the nation, and to both the admirals. Nor did he at all coincide in the distinction made between West and Byng ; one of his letters mentions that West had previously been cashiered for cowardice, but had been restored to the service through interest.

a sentence ; and, in the hope of finding some middle way, they inquired of the Admiralty “whether they were at liberty to mitigate an Article of War on which they had doubts.” They were told that they had no such power. And, indeed, the words of the Article in question were so precise that no other answer could have been given. They must either acquit or convict. Constrained to a choice between these alternatives, the majority resolved to convict ; but the minority resisted strenuously, and were only at last brought to acquiesce in an unfavourable verdict by the consent of the majority to append to their finding an unanimous recommendation to mercy, couched in terms so strong that all believed it must secure the prisoner’s pardon. It was probably owing also to the exertions of the minority that the verdict itself was drawn up in terms of studied moderation, which even suggested an idea of its informality. They did not find him guilty of the whole 12th Article, but only of part of it : “of not having done his utmost to take and destroy the enemy’s ships ;” and not only carefully omitted imputing his conduct to “cowardice, negligence, or disaffection,” but, in the recommendation to mercy, which they incorporated with their verdict as an inseparable part of it, they expressly acquitted him both of cowardice and disaffection, and attributed his conduct to “an error in judgment only.” Since the time of Henry VIII. there had never been an instance of such a recommendation being disregarded ; but the King, whose only virtue was courage, was at all times bitter against all whom he suspected of the opposite quality, and certainly did not coincide in the acquittal of cowardice which the court-martial had pronounced in this instance. The authorities at the Admiralty, however, who, being a fresh Board, were in no degree implicated in the blame which Byng’s defence had attributed to their predecessors, were apparently willing to save him. But the very means they took were injurious to him, by investing his

condemnation with an air of legality. They requested the King's permission to take the opinion of the Judges whether the sentence was legal; because doubts had arisen on that point, the question having been particularly raised "whether the crime of negligence, which was not expressed in any part of the proceedings, could in this case be supplied by implication." The Judges pronounced the sentence to be perfectly legal.

By this time, however, every one, except the King himself, was anxious for its remission. In the House of Commons more than one motion was brought forward with this sole object. The House even passed a Bill, at the request of the members of the Court-martial, releasing them from their oaths of secrecy, because they alleged they could disclose something in the Admiral's favour; though it eventually appeared that, as far as the strict forms of law went, they had nothing material to reveal. The ministers, especially Pitt, the Secretary of State, and Lord Temple, the First Lord of the Admiralty, recommended the King to grant a pardon; Pitt assuring him that it was the desire, not only of the House of Commons, but of the people in general. His Majesty appealed to Pitt's own language in times past, as a proof that the House of Commons did not always express the sentiments of the people; steadily resisted all advice and all solicitation to exercise his prerogative of mercy; and, on the 14th of March, Byng was shot at Portsmouth, on the quarterdeck of the *Monarch*. He had behaved throughout this most trying time with a manly and composed courage, professing himself satisfied when he heard that he was acquitted of cowardice; and, when about to suffer, he delivered a paper to the Marshal of the Admiralty, in which he claimed credit for "a faithful discharge of his duty according to the best of his judgment;" spoke of himself as "a victim destined to divert the indignation and resentment of the people from their proper objects;" and

expressed a confident persuasion that "justice would be done to his reputation hereafter."

In this hope he was so far from being deceived that the unreasonable cruelty of his sentence has caused something more than justice to be done to his reputation. The reaction began to operate the very moment that he was dead; for only three days afterwards Horace Walpole in reference to his execution, speaks of "murder," and "a hero;" and he is still praised as a valiant and able officer by many who, had he been allowed to live, would certainly have deservedly used very different language respecting him. It would be hard to deny the praise of courage to one who, having been kept for three months in a situation full of anxiety, suspense, distress and shame, of every circumstance calculated to unhinge the nerves and break the spirit, preserved an unvaried dignity of composure, and died with such unaffected fearless simplicity: still his was a purely passive courage; a quality wholly different from and inferior to the animated danger-seeking valour required of those who aspire to command fleets and armies, which leads them to make light of adverse circumstances, which indeed often almost seems to blind them to their existence, and which makes them measure their own undertakings, not by what others expect them to do, but by what is possible to be done. His ability, if indeed in a commander that can be separated from the possession of such an active valour as we have endeavoured to describe, is open to still graver impeachment. It is incomprehensible why he should have decided that he could not defeat the French; and still more so, how he could have argued that, even if he did defeat them, his victory would not have saved Port Mahon. We ought, indeed, to modify our censure of him on this account, by recollecting that the officers at Gibraltar, as well as a council of war which he held after his action with De la Galissonière, unanimously agreed with him



on these points ; but we must not the less pronounce that the reasons which actuated them were futile and groundless. Had Hawke been in command of Byng's fleet there can be no doubt whatever that he would have defeated the enemy, and saved Minorca. And we shall hardly be unfair to Byng's memory if we speak of him as an honest but weak mean ; fearless of personal danger, but unable to bear responsibility ; wholly undeserving to be put to death, but equally unfit to be entrusted with the command of a British fleet and with the honour of the British nation.

The ministers, and especially the Board of Admiralty, may be acquitted of the imputation that has been often levelled at them, that they procured Byng's execution to prevent an inquiry into their own mismanagement ; for those who had displayed such shameful neglect in equipping his fleet were no longer in office when he was arrested and executed. On the contrary, those who were in office actually tried to save him : though they did not do as ministers in the present day would do, and as Pitt himself actually did four years afterwards, they did not resign their offices when their advice was rejected. The blame of the cruel and unjust execution belongs solely to the King ; and if, as the French novelist satirically said, he thought it well "to kill one admiral to encourage the rest," in that respect he failed in his object.\* Before Byng and West reached England, he had learned to make a distinction between them ; receiving West with favour, and desiring that he should be sent back to the Mediter-

\* Our naval code at this time was intolerably severe. In 1745 an action took place between the French privateer *Apollo*, 54, with a crew of 500 men, and the British frigate *Anglesea*, 40, with 250 men. Captain Elton, who commanded, and his first lieutenant, were killed ; above 60 of the crew were killed or wounded, and the ship was greatly damaged. Yet, because Mr. Baker Phillips, the second lieutenant, who had succeeded to the command, struck his colours under these circumstances, he was convicted by a court-martial of cowardice, condemned and executed.

anean with a fresh command. West was actually fitting out a squadron when the sentence was pronounced on his former chief; and he at once resigned his command, alleging as his reason that he could only be answerable for courage and fidelity to his king; that, as it now appeared that an officer might be capitally convicted for an error in judgment, he was unwilling to put himself in a situation in which his life might depend partly on the correctness of his own judgment, and partly on the right understanding of those who might be called on to judge of that judgment: and therefore, as, if either failed, the consequences might be fatal to himself, he declined to expose himself to them, and in effect relinquished his profession rather than continue it under the interpretation which the court-martial had affixed to the duties and responsibilities of a commander-in-chief. In justice to Byng it must be added that, in his letter of resignation, West expressed his own entire concurrence in the reasons which led that officer to despair of saving Minorca, and to decide on reserving himself for the protection of Gibraltar.

Hawke when, on his arrival at Gibraltar in July, 1756, he superseded Byng, found that he had arrived too late to effect anything of importance. Minorca having fallen, De la Galissonière had returned to Toulon; and the British Admiral, unable to attack him there, was forced to confine his efforts to distressing the French trade, in which he was very successful, and to curbing the insolence of those powers who, though not at war with us, took various opportunities of displaying an unfriendly feeling towards us. In the former war, the Empress Queen had been our ally. A change of policy had brought us into friendly relations with Frederic of Prussia, and Maria Theresa in consequence looked on us as enemies. Under the influence of this feeling, her officer at Leghorn seized and imprisoned Captain Wright, the commander of a British privateer, on a false pretext

that he had violated the neutrality of the port by capturing a French ship in their jurisdiction. Though Captain Wright was not a Queen's officer, Hawke at once detached a squadron to demand the instant release of him, his ship, and his crew. And the Austrian authorities had no alternative but a trembling compliance. In the same spirit, acting in an opposite direction, the Spaniards had permitted a French privateer to capture a British vessel laden with provisions for Gibraltar, while she was close to the Spanish shore. The Frenchman took her into Algeiras ; but Hawke, on hearing of the circumstance, since there was no doubt that she had been captured in neutral waters, demanded her restitution, and, when the Spanish governor refused it, sent in his ships' boats and cut her out.

Still nothing was done in Europe, either in 1756 or in the following year, to retrieve our glory which had been so tarnished by the loss of Minorca. Great things were expected from the change in the ministerial arrangements which, after a series of petty intrigues and abortive attempts, ended in June in placing the chief authority in the hands of Pitt ; but his first measures bore as unfortunate a complexion as those of his predecessors. He is not, indeed, responsible for the misconduct of Admiral Holbourne on the North American station, who certainly deserved Byng's fate much better than he. Holbourne had a fine fleet of seventeen sail of the line, five frigates, and several sloops ; when he heard that M. Bois de la Mothe was off Louisbourg. He had been sent out on purpose to retake that town, which had been restored at the peace ; but, when he found that the French force amounted to eighteen sail of the line, and six frigates, he decided that they were too strong for him, and retreated without firing a gun ; justifying his cowardice by the assertion that the enemy had a greater weight of metal. A "new sea phrase," as old Lord Chesterfield

called it, "and one unknown to Blake." In a subsequent year the design of reducing Louisbourg was revived, and, as we shall presently see, was crowned with success; which was thus proved to depend not so much on the amount of the force employed, as on the resolution of the commanders to whom the force was entrusted.

But the first enterprise which Pitt himself planned failed as completely as the worst-managed expedition of his predecessors; and the failure was principally owing to the injudicious choice he had made of the general to command the land force. Rochefort, as one of the chief arsenals of France, was undoubtedly the most important town on her western coast, and the minister had received trustworthy information that it was most inadequately defended: its ramparts were crumbling, its batteries were but half supplied; its garrison was scanty and insufficient. Relying on this intelligence, of which the only fault was that it had been collected some years back, and was more applicable to a former than to the present state of affairs in Rochefort, Pitt resolved to send an expedition against it, with the view not only of destroying an arsenal of such importance, but, at the same time, of effecting a diversion which might be of great value to the Duke of Cumberland, who, as the ally of the King of Prussia, was warring on the eastern frontier of France against almost overpowering numbers. The command of the fleet Pitt (for Lord Temple was but a cipher in his hands) gave to Sir Edward Hawke; but as general of the land-force he selected Sir John Mordaunt, who had no recommendation whatever for such an employment, except his relationship to the noble house of Peterborough. One of Pitt's most mischievous weaknesses (and few great men have had more) was an almost childish deference to aristocratical connections, till he himself became a member of the aristocracy. And no man ever made a worse choice than events proved that he did in this instance.



The armament sailed from Spithead, with sealed orders, on the 8th of September. On the 14th the fleet was off Scilly; the orders were opened, and Hawke at once bore down and stood in to the Bay of Biscay. He had sixteen sail of the line, three frigates, twelve smaller vessels; and among his captains he had the two most brilliant officers of their rank in the service, Howe and Rodney. The land-force amounted to above seven thousand men; and there could apparently be no doubt that the expedition was in every respect equal to the service expected from it. Yet it wholly failed. It was easy enough to land a body of troops on the island of Aix; Howe, who led the attack in the *Magnanime*, speedily silenced the principal fort with his broadsides; but, elated by their success, soldiers and sailors all alike got drunk, and by their excesses roused the enemy to the resistance of despair. The occupation of Aix was only a preliminary to the grand object, the attack on Rochefort itself; but, as soon as the army was called upon to act, Mordaunt's total ignorance of his profession began to show itself, and quickly bred dissensions between him and Hawke. He could not be made to comprehend that the operations of the fleet must depend on the state of the wind and of the weather; and, because Hawke would not declare himself independent of both, Mordaunt refused to move his men. One of his officers, Colonel James Wolfe, destined before the end of the war to win himself immortal glory as the conqueror of Quebec, would fain have had a foretaste of that triumph here; and offered, with five hundred men and three ships, to make himself master of the town. But Mordaunt, whose fault was incapacity rather than cowardice, would not permit an inferior officer to undertake a task which he deemed too hazardous for himself. Presently when it was suggested that, before Rochefort was attacked, it was necessary to reduce a strong fort called Fouras at the mouth of the river Charente, Howe would gladly have laid the *Magnanime* under its

walls, and battered that as he had battered the fort at Aix ; but it was decided that that enterprise should be entrusted to the army. When the boats were ready to convey the troops selected for that service to the shore, the General refused to embark the men in the afternoon, and sent Hawke word he would wait till morning. When morning came he sent a fresh message that he would not land at all, but would return to England. Hawke, with great indignation, demolished the fortifications on the Isle of Aix, as the only service left in his power ; and this splendid armament returned, with no greater achievements to show than this, which might have been performed, as indeed it was performed, by a single ship. Mordaunt was brought before a court-martial, but was acquitted ; and Hawke, declaring that operations to be executed by a combination of land and sea forces never succeeded, gladly found himself appointed to the command of a splendid fleet, designed to intercept M. Bois de la Mothe on his return from North America. The Frenchman, however, escaped him, and got safe into Brest ; and Hawke had yet some time to wait before he was able to put the coping-stone to his glory by a second overthrow of the enemy in a pitched battle.

The year 1757, however, was far from being barren of glory and of solid success to our arms ; though the scene was almost new, and though the importance of the achievements was not at first universally acknowledged. The peace which had been concluded in Europe had done but little to check the aggressive ambition of Dupleix in India ; and, in ignorance that he had been superseded and replaced by a successor, M. Godchen, who took out with him instructions of a most pacific tenor, our Government, at the beginning of 1754, sent a squadron to Bengal under the command of Admiral Watson. He had not been long on the station when the great Clive also arrived. Clive had been sent out, with a commission as

lieutenant-colonel in the royal army, as Governor of Fort St. David, with a provisional commission to succeed to the government of Madras. But his pre-eminent talents caused him to be transferred from place to place as any district seemed to be threatened with danger, whether from the French or the native princes ; and, in fact, he only held his government at Fort David for two months, and the authority at Madras he never assumed at all. Watson was lying in Bombay harbour when Clive reached it, having, in obedience to the instructions given to him on his departure from England, made that city his first point, to take the command of a force intended to act against the French in the Deccan. But, while he was still on the seas, M. Godchen had made a treaty with Mr. Saunders, the English Governor of Madras, which put an end to the project of attacking him ; and the authorities at Bombay suggested to Clive and Watson that they should combine their forces against a pirate named Angria who, from his hereditary stronghold of Gheriah, a fortress about one hundred and twenty miles to the south of Bombay, had long harassed our trade, as well as that of every other nation whose ships traversed the Indian waters. They gladly undertook the enterprise ; and, while they were making the preliminary arrangements, an incident occurred which strikingly marks the disinterested and patriotic spirit which actuated both commanders, and thus afforded no insignificant omen of their success. The naval officers formed a majority of the council of war assembled to deliberate on the measures to be adopted ; and they framed a scale on which the prize-money was to be divided, according to which Clive, though chief in command of the land-force, was only to share with the captains of the squadron. The military officers resented this arrangement as an affront to their service, and claimed for him a share equal to that of Rear-Admiral Pocock, Watson's second in command. Clive, in their name,

presented a remonstrance to Watson, who declared himself incompetent by his own authority to alter a resolution adopted by the whole council ; but proposed, out of the portion which would fall to himself, to make Clive's share equal to Pocock's. The moment that the principle was thus admitted, Clive renounced all idea of profiting by the Admiral's liberality : his sole object, he said, had been to satisfy the soldiers that he had not sacrificed their dignity by waiving his own rights ; but nothing should induce him to enrich himself at the expense of his colleague and his friend. The Mahrattas proposed to unite their forces with ours in this expedition, but it was soon seen that they intended to betray us, and to use our overwhelming force as a tool to get Angria's treasures, which were believed to be immense, into their own hands ; Watson however received intelligence of their design, and was so prompt in his operations that he gave them no time to execute their contemplated treachery. His force consisted of six king's ships, three of the line, one fifty-gun ship, and two frigates, with three frigates and a few smaller vessels belonging to the Company. He divided it into two squadrons ; one of which, under Pocock, was ordered to attack Angria's fleet, while he himself led the other against his forts and batteries. Angria's ships were inferior in size to our own, but his forts and batteries were armed with two hundred and fifty heavy cannon, and both his crew and garrisons fought with all the courage of despair ; but neither could long resist our heavy, rapid, and well-aimed fire. Accident also favoured us : one of his vessels was set on fire by a shell, she drifted among her consorts, which were lashed together, and communicated the flames to them, and the conflagrations caught the buildings on shore, so that the whole of the pirates' dockyard and arsenal was soon completely destroyed. The attack on the forts was equally successful. Clive who had disembarked with one or two companies of soldiers, cannonaded them on the



side of the land, while Watson battered them from his ships. In two hours the pirates were almost silenced, in four they were entirely subdued; and Clive marched in and hoisted the British colours on the walls. Angria himself escaped, but his family was captured with all his treasures and warlike stores; and this splendid success was achieved with a loss on our side which did not amount to twenty killed and wounded.

It was but the prelude to greater triumphs. Clive proceeded to Fort St. David to take upon himself the government, and Watson accompanied him with the fleet. But he was scarcely settled in his new abode when he received intelligence of the capture of Calcutta by Suraja-Dowlah, and an order from the Governor of Madras to proceed to Bengal in command of the expedition which was to recover Calcutta and chastise the Nabob for the atrocities which had been committed against our countrymen. The fleet was to accompany and co-operate with him. The naval and military arrangements were made with all possible rapidity, and on the 16th of October Watson received Clive and his little army of nine hundred British infantry and fifteen hundred sepoys on board his ships, and set sail for the Hooghly. The weather was unusually bad, even for that stormy season of the year. Nothing but the greatest resolution on the part of the captains enabled some of the ships to reach their destination at all, and it was the 22nd of December before the whole fleet arrived at Fulta, a town about forty miles below Calcutta. Without a moment's loss of time, Watson and Clive commenced their operations. The navigation of the river was of the most intricate character: its abrupt windings, and the consequent variety of currents, filled it with shoals, and bars, and rapids, requiring the most unceasing vigilance and the most skilful pilotage. Its banks, too, were studded with forts; so that, while the natural difficulties of the stream seemed to render it impassable to large vessels, the

artificial obstacles seemed equally to bid defiance to small ones. The British Admiral, however, like Clive himself, was more inclined to think of what was to be done than of the difficulty of doing it. The fleet worked up to the first fort, Budge-Budge ; the boats landed Clive and his men, and preparations were being made to attack it at daybreak, when in the middle of the night, a shout was heard, and news came to the fleet that the British were in possession. And so it was : a single seamen, named Strachan, half-drunk, had strolled under the walls, had clambered up to the top of a breach, which had been made by a short cannonade from Watson's ship on the preceding evening, and finding only a few Indians sitting on the platform, had shouted out, "The place is mine !" and to make his words good, had fired his pistol into the middle of them. The Indians resisted for a moment : but two or three of Strachan's messmates had followed him and joined in what was still no more than a fray. The tumult drew the attention of some of the soldiers who were not far off : directed by the noise to the right spot, a score of them swarmed up the same breach, the garrison fled at the opposite gate, and Budge-Budge was ours ; having been gained with the loss of one life only, Captain Campbell, who was accidentally shot by one of his own men. The next morning, which had been fixed for the attack, there was nothing left to do but to inquire into the circumstances of our success. Watson who was a strict disciplinarian, sent for Strachan, to hear his account of it. "To be sure sir," said the unconscious hero, "it was I who took the fort ; but I hope there was no harm in it." The Admiral was amused by the answer, followed as it was by the sailor's own account of the transaction, as far as he understood it, and could not fail to be pleased at the result of the exploit : but for the moment he thought it necessary to reprimand him for his drunkenness and absence from his ship. And Strachan was dis-

missed, surprised at his reception, and swearing loudly that "if he were flogged for taking this fort he would never take another. Flogged, however, he was not; and, in fact, Watson rewarded, and would gladly have promoted him, but his incessant irregularities made that impossible, and he lived and died a common sailor, nor, as far as is known, did he take any more forts. A week afterwards on the 2nd of January, 1757, the combined force retook Calcutta; and though on one or two occasions, dissensions on the subjects of rights and privileges of the respective services of the army and navy and the Company's troops threatened the maintenance of the harmony between Clive and Watson, the honest patriotism of the two great officers, and their mutual admiration of each other, speedily terminated all disputes without any injury to the interests of their country, or any diminution of their cordiality.

From Calcutta they moved against Hooghly, a wealthy city, twenty miles above Calcutta. The river, which daily grew more difficult, sadly impeded their advance, as some of the ships grounded on the sandbanks, and were not got off without great exertion and no little danger. They were six days in reaching Hooghly; but, when they did reach it they attacked it on both sides, and the garrison, surprised and disheartened, surrendered after a brief resistance.

Nor were the operations of the sailors confined to their proper element. Clive having resolved to attack the Nabob's camp, applied to the Admiral to reinforce his army with some men from his ships; and Watson lent him five hundred men, who proved not the least efficient part of his force. An unusual fog disappointed some of Clive's arrangements, and baulked the enterprise of its full effect; but the audacity of an attack made by such a handful of men on an enemy twenty times as numerous as themselves produced a great impression on the Nabob; and Watson's language completed his panic. He wrote a letter to Suraja-

Dowlah, announcing the expected arrival of reinforcements to his fleet, and Clive's army ; and threatened that " he would kindle such a flame in the Nabob's country, as all the waters of the Ganges should not be able to extinguish." He had evidently made some progress in oriental figures of speech ; but the conclusion of his letter must have been incomprehensible to a Hindoo, however full of the spirit of a British officer. " Remember," he added, " that he who promises you this, never yet broke his word with you, or with any man whatever. The Nabob, thoroughly terrified, sued for and obtained peace; and, as a proof of the sincerity of his professions of friendship, he gave the English leave to attack Chandernagore, a rich and strongly-fortified town, which, some time before, he had granted to the French, and which was their principal settlement in Bengal. Chandernagore was not more than thirty miles above Hooghly, but all the difficulties which had hitherto impeded the progress of the British were as nothing when compared with those which hindered their advance to that town, and with the obstacles which bristled before them when they arrived there. The river at each mile became more full of shoals and currents. No one in India thought it possible for even a frigate to make its way so far, till the Kent, 64, with Watson on board, and the Tiger, 60, into which Pocock had shifted his flag, anchored close under the walls of the town. Clive's admiring biographer, a man himself of the most brilliant audacity, speaks of Watson's exploit as being, even at the present day, " a subject of wonder."\* Nor, when the ship had reached the appointed spot, were the perils of the undertaking at an end. The ramparts were armed with a hundred and twenty guns of the largest size, besides mortars ; and in French hands it is needless to say that they were well served. In front of some of their heaviest batteries the enemy had sunk vessels, in order the more to impede our ships, and to keep

\* Malcolm's ' Life of Clive,' i. 191-2.



them under their fire in spots where they would be unable to return it with effect. But Watson surmounted all these obstacles ; and, while Clive, with great rapidity, erected land-batteries and opened a heavy fire on the rear of the town, the ships poured a still more effective cannonade on the river-front ; and in less than three hours the garrison capitulated, and the death-blow was dealt to the French power in Bengal : the chief credit of which even Malcolm attributes to the daring boldness and admirable skill of Admiral Watson, and of the sailors under his command. This success, however, had not been attained without severe loss. The Kent had not less than sixty-eight men killed and wounded. The Tiger had sixty-three, Pocock himself being in the list, though he soon recovered ; and both vessels were severely injured in their hull and rigging.

Watson applied himself busily to repairing their damages, expecting a speedy renewal of the war with the Nabob. It does not belong to the present work to relate how quickly this expectation was fulfilled ; nor with what glory Clive, within three months of the fall of Chandernagore, brought both the war and the reign of the weak and faithless Nabob to an end on the field of Plassey ; but it must be added that, in this great final victory, the fleet also bore a part : the ships' boats accompanying the army, transporting it in safety across the Hooghly, on the left bank of which the battle was fought ; and furnishing also a brigade of sailors to swell the numbers of the still scanty but heroic band with which Clive on the 23rd of June established our Indian empire. Nor must we forget to record to the General's honour, that, having now an opportunity of requiting the Admiral's intended generosity to him at the time of the reduction of Gheriah, he nobly availed himself of it to the fullest extent ; and, while the military officers attempted to exclude the navy from their share of the prize-money, he overruled them by the energetic exercise of his own authority, and secured

to Watson and his men an equal portion of the fruits of victory. There can be no doubt but that Watson would also have received the reward which he deserved from the Home Government; but, unhappily, his incessant exertions in a climate so unfavourable brought on him an attack of fever, of which he died at the beginning of the autumn. His post devolved upon Pocock; and it was fortunate indeed for our Indian empire that the new commander was of a kindred spirit to his predecessor; for the French were preparing to make great efforts for the recovery of their preponderance of influence in India, and had sent out a fleet larger than any which had yet been seen in that country, having on board a well-appointed army of upwards of three thousand men; and the commander had instructions to expel our merchants and troops from the Indian territory, and our ships from the Indian waters: Comte Lally was the general, Comte d'Aché the admiral. He had eleven ships of the line and two frigates under his command: and, had he come straight to India from France, he would have found no English force at all able to resist him. Happily he crossed the Atlantic to Rio, from Rio he recrossed it to the Mauritius and Isle of Bourbon, making such long halts at both these islands that it was almost a year after his departure from Brest before he cast anchor in the harbour of Pondicherry. By that time Pocock had received a reinforcement from England, though by no means such as placed him on a level with his antagonist. He had at first eight ships of the line and one frigate; and his ships were also much smaller than those of the French. In the first action that took place between him and D'Aché he had fifty guns fewer, in the third and last he had above two hundred. Yet, in spite of this great disparity of force, he three times in the course of the next year and a half engaged the French fleet, and in every instance put it to flight with a loss of men incomparably

greater than he himself sustained ; while in the intervals between these battles he entirely confined the enemy to their own harbours, and secured our merchantmen a voyage as perfectly unmolested as if the fleur-de-lys had never been seen to the east of the Cape. It would be to no purpose to recapitulate the details of these battles. At the distance of above a century those conflicts only which were distinguished by splendid and visible trophies, and marked by such self-evident results as the immediate acquisitions of fortresses or territories, can arrest the attention of posterity ; and Pocock's exploits in disarming and rendering wholly impotent the greatly superior force of his antagonist, though as beneficial to his country as many a more showy victory, must share the fate of many a deed of eminent private virtue, and rest in the shade of comparative oblivion, not because they were unworthy to be remembered, but because they are jostled out of notice by others of more conspicuous results, and of a subsequent and, as such, more interesting period.

In the West, too, we gained decisive advantages before any results were obtained in Europe by Pitt's policy at all commensurate with the vast labour and expenditure required by the expeditions which he was incessantly devising.

One action is espëcially deserving of mention, not only for its intrinsic gallantry, though that was splendid, but still more for the relationship which one of the chief actors in it bore to one whose subsequent eagerness for a sailor's life the fame of his uncle's prowess had probably some share in kindling. In October, 1757, Admiral Cotes, who had been protecting our interests in the West Indies with great vigilance and skill, hearing that the French Admiral, M. Kersaint, was about to sail for Europe with a small squadron as convoy to a valuable flotilla of merchantmen, sent Captain Forrest, of the *Augusta*, 64, with two 60-gun ships, the *Dreadnought*, Captain Suckling, and the



Edinburgh, Captain Langdon, to intercept them. At daybreak on the 21st, they fell in with the expected enemy off Cape François: but, a day or two before, M. Kersaint had been strongly reinforced; and his squadron now consisted of two seventy-fours, one ship of sixty-four, one of fifty, and three frigates. It was a surprise, and to most men it would have been a disagreeable one; but Captain Forrest had no idea that the disproportion between the two squadrons, great as it was, could relieve him from the plain duty of attacking a Frenchman, wherever he met one. However, not to take the responsibility wholly on himself, he called a council of war; when he found his brother captains of the same mind. Suckling argued that if the enemy wished for an action, it would be a pity to disappoint him; Captain Langdon agreed: so Forrest sent them back to their ships, with orders at once to bear down and engage. The battle lasted two hours and a half; at the end of which time M. Kersaint found his own ship, *L'Intrepide*, 74, was so entirely disabled, that he was forced to call one of the frigates to tow him out of the line: the other seventy-four was equally damaged; *L'Opiniâtre*, 64, was dismasted; and the *Greenwich*, 50, a ship which had formerly been taken from us, was greatly shattered. Our ships, as may be supposed, had not escaped without damage, and were all too much crippled in their rigging to pursue the retreating enemy. But the victory was clearly on our side. Our killed and wounded, who amounted to one hundred and twelve, did not exceed a fifth of the loss of the French ships; while the superior damage which M. Kersaint's squadron had sustained was still further shown in a storm which it encountered a few days afterwards; when the *Opiniâtre*, the *Greenwich*, and the largest of the frigates all went down. Captain Suckling's sister was Nelson's mother, and the 21st of October was long honoured in his family as a festival;



till, nearly half a century later, its glories were eclipsed by the splendid but fatal day of Trafalgar.

It has been related how Admiral Holbourne's fear of the French fleet marred the success of the first expedition sent out for the reduction of Louisbourg. But one disappointment did not lead Pitt to abandon the design ; and the next year he sent out a still finer fleet under Admiral Boscawen, with an army of nearly twelve thousand men under General Amherst. The expedition arrived off Cape Breton in June, 1758, and began the attack without delay. The brunt of the siege fell so entirely on the army that, though the ships bore their part in the cannonade of those forts and batteries of the enemy which commanded the approaches by sea, the fleet is perhaps hardly entitled to reckon the success attained among its achievements. And it is sufficient to say that the enterprise succeeded in every point, that Louisbourg, Cape Breton, and the Isle of St. John's were all taken, and have ever since remained in our possession. A similar observation will apply to the conquest of Canada in the next year: since, though no small portion of labour and danger fell to the share of Admiral Saunders' fleet in conveying the army up the St. Lawrence, and in transporting it from point to point during the operations preliminary to the great battle of Quebec, yet the decisive blow was given by the army alone; and we must not, even to do honour to the navy, rob the chaplet of Wolfe of a single leaf.

On the African coast also we gained some important advantages in the same year, 1758 ; and, what is probably entirely singular in the history of war, we owed them to a Quaker of the name of Cumming, who, having in the course of his mercantile transactions acquired a knowledge of the western coast of Africa, of the French settlements in that region, and of the feeling with which the French were regarded by the natives, suggested to

Pitt the idea of driving them out and appropriating to ourselves a commerce which was represented as very profitable. The first squadron sent out consisted of one ship of the line, one fifty gunship, one frigate, and a few smaller vessels, under Captain Marsh, of the *Harwich*. He speedily made himself master of the French fort of St. Louis, at the mouth of the Senegal; but was beaten off at the island of Goree, which proved far too strong for so small a force. St. Louis, however, was of little value to us without that more important island; and accordingly a second expedition on a larger scale was sent out under Commodore Keppel. Four sail of the line and four fine frigates composed the force under his orders; and their efforts were completely successful. Keppel, as he approached, endeavoured to lull the enemy into a false security by hoisting French colours, but his stratagem did not succeed, because he forgot to salute the governor as a French squadron would have done; but, though his artifice failed, the force under his command proved quite sufficient to secure success. He had five hundred soldiers on board, but it was not found necessary to land them; the fire of the ships was so tremendous that the garrison was wholly unable to support it; though the governor, M. de St. Jean, made a gallant resistance, he was forced to surrender; and the natives of the continent, who stood in crowds on the sea shore watching the progress of the conflict, were equally amazed at the efficacy of our artillery, and at our defeat of the French, whom they had up to that time looked upon as the first of European nations.

## CHAPTER XII.

1758—1763.

Hawke attacks Rochefort—The expedition against St. Malo—Cherbourg is destroyed—The disaster at St. Cast—Birth of Nelson—The French project an invasion of England—Pitt's measures of defence—Rodney bombards Havre—Boscawen defeats M. de la Clue—Hawke defeats Conflans—M. Thurot takes Carrickfergus—His defeat and death—Adventures of Captain Boys—Capture of Gaudaloupe—Success of Admiral Stevens in India—Capture of Pondicherry—British success in the American seas—Death of George II.—Capture of Belleisle—Of Dominica—War with Spain—Greatness of the British force afloat—Capture of the *Hermione*—Of the *Havannah*—Of *Manilla*—Rodney takes *Martinique* and other islands—Gallantry of Captain Rowley—Loss and recovery of *St John's*, Newfoundland—Peace.

BUT, in spite of these triumphs in the other quarters of the globe, Pitt was still of opinion that it was in Europe alone that vital blows could be struck at the French power. The winter of 1757 had scarcely passed, when Admiral Osborne, who was commanding in the Mediterranean, gave the enemy one wound, by intercepting a squadron of four ships that had come out of Toulon; capturing two ships of the line, the *Foudroyant*, of eighty-four guns, and the *Orphée*, of sixty-four, and driving a fifty-gun ship on shore: so that nothing escaped but one small frigate. But Pitt's object was rather to prevent the hostile squadrons from putting to sea at all; to destroy the ships in their own harbours, and to disable the harbours themselves, the arsenals, and the dockyards in which expeditions were fitted out. With this view, he now planned a series of enterprises against Rochefort, St. Malo, Cherbourg, and other places on the north-western coast of France; some to be executed by the fleet alone,

and others, in spite of Hawke's denunciation, by a combination of land and sea force. He met with partial success, which would probably have been much greater, had he not a second time displayed a want of judgment in the selection of his military commanders, which was wholly at variance with the discernment which guided the choice of his sailors ; but, while he selected Hawke, Anson, Howe, and men like them to command the ships, he entrusted the soldiers to such officers as the Duke of Marlborough and General Bligh : of whom, the latter had outlived what energy and ability he had once possessed ; while the former had never had, or at least had never displayed any.

That attack prospered best which was committed to Hawke and the fleet alone. Intelligence had reached England that a powerful force of merchantmen, transports, and ships of war was in preparation at Rochefort, being intended as a reinforcement for Louisbourg, which, as we have already mentioned, was taken by us in the course of the ensuing summer. In the middle of March, Hawke was sent with seven sail of the line and three frigates to destroy them ; and on the 3rd of April he entered the Basque Roads, destined hereafter to be the scene of a still more splendid achievement of British valour,\* and even now about to furnish the enemy with a proof how little heavy batteries, and even natural obstacles, can avail to hinder the advance of men resolutely bent on conquest. The French ships of war were soon ascertained to consist of five sail of the line and seven frigates ; the merchantmen and transports amounted to upwards of forty. Aided as they were by heavy batteries on the Isle of Aix, which commanded the approaches, their force was far superior to Hawke's ; however, they did not dare to exchange a single shot with him, but cut their cables and retreated. Only one vessel, a small brig, fell into our

\* See vol. ii. p. 498.



hands ; from the rest their own crews were presently seen to throw overboard their guns and stores, to enable them to get more completely out of our reach. And the next morning the ships of war were discovered all aground, waiting till we should retire, to endeavour to repair the injuries they had inflicted on themselves, in preference to an encounter with the dreaded energy of the British Admiral. Hawke could not pursue them ; and, indeed, the chief object of his expedition was achieved, since he had totally baffled the design of sending reinforcements to North America : the ships that were to have gone were crippled, the stores were destroyed. All that remained in his power was to destroy also the new fortifications, which, since his attack of the preceding year, had been erected on Aix by the French ; and before the end of the month he returned to England.

The next expedition was a twofold, if, indeed, it may not rather be called a threefold one, as no less than two fleets and an army were employed in it. With the principal fleet Lord Anson, who, at Pitt's express request, quitted the Admiralty to assume the chief command, was to blockade Brest ; while Howe, though not yet an Admiral, had the command of another, which was to co-operate with fourteen thousand men under the Duke of Marlborough, in an attack upon the whole line of the French coast from St. Malo to Havre. The two fleets, with the troops on board, sailed from Spithead on the 1st of June. Thirty-six years afterwards, Howe rendered this day for ever memorable in our naval annals ; but the recollection of it, which the present expedition left behind, was neither glorious nor satisfactory. The labours of the fleet were confined to transporting the army to different points, which, it was hoped, might prove assailable ; the exploits of the army were limited to destroying a great quantity of naval and military stores which were collected at St. Servand and Solidore, two suburbs of St. Malo, which strange neglect

had left unfortified, and no less than fourteen ships of war, which were lying in different stages of completion or equipment at the dockyards at those places. But the Duke did not venture to assault St. Malo itself, but preferred to re-embark and seek some weaker place. However, he effected no other descent; he sailed along the coast as far as Havre, but found that town also too strong. He returned to Cherbourg, but was driven off that harbour by adverse winds; and at the end of a month he again cast anchor at Spithead, having certainly inflicted great injury on the French, though, according to those who disapproved of Pitt's policy, among whom was the King himself, not sufficient to counterbalance the great expense incurred in fitting out the expedition. Mr. Fox, comparing the results with the preparations, said we were breaking windows with guineas. George II. said, if we could boast of having burnt empty ships, the French could boast of having driven off full ones.

The next expedition fared still worse. Howe had now General Bligh for his colleague, in command of the troops. They quitted England on the first of August, and their first point was Cherbourg. Against this town they had complete success. The fleet covered the landing of the army, which on the 7th landed in Marais Bay, about five miles to the westward; and, though the enemy did their best to annoy the troops while in the boats, from the time that they were arrayed on the shore they offered them no resistance, but at once surrendered the town and the forts which protected it. Indeed, the works of all kinds at Cherbourg had of late been much neglected, and the place was hardly tenable against an attack. Such as it was, however, we now totally destroyed it: the piers and basins were demolished; the batteries werestripped of their guns, of which those made of iron were burst, and those of brass were sent to England; the magazines and storehouses, with all their contents, were burnt; as well as the vessels

which lay in the harbour; and from thence, after a short delay, the fleet sailed to the westward, to renew the attempt upon St. Malo. Since, two months before, St. Malo had been judged too strong for the Duke of Marlborough to attack, it was hardly to be expected that it could now be taken by a weaker army; and the very first reconnaissance, after the troops had landed, decided that the place was quite impregnable to the force under Bligh's command. The British troops had landed in Lunaire Bay, to the east of St. Malo, a spot very unfavourable for the operations both of the fleet and of the army: of the latter, because the river Rance now lay between it and the town; of the former, because a chain of rocks protected the harbour on that side, so that Howe could not approach St. Malo itself without risking the safety of his ships. Nor, since the weather had become very stormy, could he remain in Lunaire Bay, nor re-embark the troops at that point. It was decided, therefore, to move both fleet and army round to the Bay of St. Cast, which lay a few miles to the westward; but, in the mean time, a French army of some strength had been collected under the command of the Duke d'Aiguillon, the governor of the province, to attack Bligh, in the hope of entirely cutting off his retreat. Had the French General been a man of skill, or even of personal courage, he could hardly have failed to capture the whole army; but he took up his own position on the top of a windmill, to survey the conflict instead of sharing it. His subalterns hesitated to act in his absence, and all the English with the exception of the rearguard of fifteen hundred men were safe in the boats before the enemy fell upon them. Even as it was, though the rearguard fought desperately, numbers were killed, among whom was its commander, General Drury; many more were taken prisoners, and our entire loss did not amount to less than a thousand men. The disaster would have been greater still, had it not been for the intrepidity

of Howe himself, who, perceiving that the rowers of the boats in which the soldiers were to embark were unwilling to face the heavy fire of shot and shell, which the victorious French were pouring upon them, and which they had no means of returning, led them on in his own barge, and by his personal exertions saved many of the soldiers who were wading, or, in their despair, swimming to the fleet.

One event still remains to be mentioned, which marks the year 1758 as an era of special importance in the naval, or indeed in any history of England. In the small village of Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk, of which his father was the vicar, was born on the 29th of September, Horatio Nelson : in whom a weak and sickly frame could not repress the most heroic courage, the most brilliant genius ; who, keeping those high qualities ever under the dominion and guidance of the purest and most disinterested patriotism, rose to undisputed pre-eminence in the profession which he chose ; and who, falling by a death as glorious as his life, has left his unrivalled fame as an example to the latest generations of British sailors.

At no time in the history of France had her government been at once so corrupt and shameless, and also so imbecile, as during the latter part of the reign of Louis XV., who was himself a slave to a succession of mistresses of the lowest class ; and whose ministers had no higher aim, and knew no worthier means to attain it, than to keep their places by a mean subservience to their varying or purchased caprices. It was a repetition of the state of England in the time of Charles II., with the addition that, since all traces of constitutional principles had long been eradicated in France, the French were destitute of the opportunities of checking or rousing their rulers, which the English occasionally found and exercised even at that inglorious epoch. Yet the numerous attacks which we had made in 1758 on the French coast had shamed even those who now wielded authority at Paris into an idea of



retaliation; and, at the commencement of the ensuing year, it became known in England that the French harbours were busy with preparations for an invasion of this country on a grand scale. A large army was forming on the northern coast, under the command of the Duke d'Aiguillon. One fleet was being equipped at Toulon, by M. de la Clue; a larger still was at Brest, under the command of the Marquis de Conflans; and it was proposed that, when all was ready, M. de la Clue should quit Toulon, pass the Straits, sail up the Bay of Biscay, and join Conflans; that the combined fleets should sweep the Channel; take the Duke d'Aiguillon on board at Havre: and, having made an unresisted passage to the English coast, should land the army at any point which might appear most favourable for revenging on our shores the insults and injuries which had been sustained by Rochefort, Cherbourg, and St. Malo. A small but well-appointed squadron was at the same time to issue from Dunkirk, under the command of M. Thurot, who had shown such conspicuous skill and enterprise in the command of a single privateer, that he was now adopted into the Royal Navy. He also was to be accompanied by a land-force, which he was to conduct to the shores of Ireland or Scotland, as the state of affairs in either country should invite him at the moment of his setting out.

Pitt was not so intent on delivering blows himself as to be neglectful of the duty of taking precautions for defence. The preparations of France were formidable; well-calculated, that is, to excite fear in any nation that should not be abundantly prepared to resist them. And Pitt (for in all that related to the war, whether by sea or land, he was in effect sole minister) did his best to excite in the people a fear lest, in the hour of danger, they should be found not so prepared. Such a fear he termed a magnanimous fear; and he looked on it as the parent of safety. He called out the militia, and, having pro-

cured an act of parliament for that purpose, he brought down the regiments from the midland and northern counties to the southern coast, resolved to trust in them to repel the Duke d'Aiguillon if he should land, without withdrawing a single man from the British contingent which he had sent the year before to reinforce Prince Ferdinand in Germany. At the same time he resolved again to "threaten the threatener" on his own ground, and sent Hawke to blockade Brest; and Rodney, who had lately received his flag, to bombard Havre. He was the junior admiral in the service, but to him fell the honour of striking the first blow. The force placed under his orders consisted of one sixty-gun ship, four of fifty guns, five frigates, and a few bomb-vessels; with these, on the 3rd of July, he anchored in the roads of Havre. As it was from thence that the invading army was to sail, the port was full of stores of all kinds, and transports, and flat-bottomed boats, designed to bear their part in the Duke's enterprise; while powerful batteries had been erected along the shore to protect them, which were manned with more than usual completeness by the regiments already assembled there. It was to no purpose, however, that they kept up a heavy fire on the British fleet from the time of its appearance: Rodney placed his bomb-vessels as calmly as if no opposition to his undertaking were attempted. The sailors worked hard all night; by daybreak on the 4th, every vessel was in her station, and commenced a bombardment which was continued without intermission for two days and nights. The enemy's boats were burnt, their stores were burnt, and the town itself was repeatedly set on fire. A few days afterwards, some of the flat-bottomed boats, which had been saved from the general destruction, tried to escape along the shore; but the Admiral's vigilance was equal to his other qualifications for command, and he pursued and drove them ashore at Port Bassin, where he compelled the French Commandant to burn

them himself, as the only condition on which he would spare the town, which it was in his power to destroy. He took the opportunity also to teach M. de Brassac a lesson on good faith. That officer had sent two officers to Rodney, conveying his promise to burn the boats, if the British Admiral would spare the town ; but when, in consequence of that promise, we had suspended our fire, he refused to fulfil it, on the plea that his commander, the Duke d'Harcourt, refused to ratify the undertaking into which he had entered. Being made aware of this treachery, Rodney detained the officers ; and would not release them till the boats were burnt according to promise. He then returned home, having so completely destroyed Havre that it has never recovered its former importance as an arsenal for ships of war ; and he lived to see the day when it was of great importance to us that a place with such natural advantages, and so directly opposite our own principal dock-yard, was no longer in a condition to protect a hostile fleet.

During the whole summer Hawke was vigilantly blockading Brest, and Boscawen was lying off Toulon ; but, instead of seeking to confine M. de la Clue to that port, he endeavoured rather to entice or to irritate him to come forth that they might decide the merits of their respective fleets in a pitched battle. The strength of the two fleets was not very unequal, though what advantage did exist, was on our side. The English Admiral had fourteen sail of the line and one frigate ; the Frenchman had twelve sail of the line and three frigates ; and his weight of metal was inferior to ours. He was so impressed with a sense of his inferiority, that, though Boscawen carefully left the entrance of the harbour open, he would not come out. Boscawen then tried to provoke him out, by sending in three ships to attack two of the French fleet which lay in apparently exposed situations ; but the batteries on shore were found to give the Frenchmen a sufficient protection, and still M. de la Clue lay snug in harbour, and still Bos-



cawen cruised about chafing on the outside. After a time, however, as the ships employed in this attack had been severely handled, and as other vessels of the fleet were also in need of cleansing and repair, Boscawen retired to Gibraltar to refit; and M. de la Clue, not knowing which way he had gone, thought the opportunity favorable to pass the Straits, gain the Atlantic, and join Conflans off Brest. Suspecting, however, that such an attempt might be made, Boscawen, while at Gibraltar, kept vigilant watch; and, though the Frenchman did contrive to get clear of the Straits before he was discovered, the Englishman was instantly after him, and was in chase with his whole fleet within two hours of the time that the French were seen to the west of the Rock, and standing to the northward. He pursued them with such energy that, in their flight, one portion of them got separated from the main body. He continued the chase all night; and the next day, being off Cape Lagos, he came up with his antagonist, who had then but seven sail with him. By two in the afternoon, Boscawen brought him to action; the two flagships engaged one another. M. de la Clue fought gallantly, and, as he adhered to the usual tactics of his countrymen, and fired mainly at his opponent's rigging, the *Namur*, our Commander's vessel, sustained so much damage in her masts that the Admiral was forced to shift his flag to the *Newark*. That, however, was the limit of the advantage gained by the enemy: our successes were more marked, and more important. The French Admiral himself, badly wounded, was conveyed in safety to the shore; but the flagship, his *Ocean*, 80, was captured and afterwards burnt; the *Redoubtable*, 74, shared her fate; two more seventy-fours, and *La Modeste*, 64, were taken; and the scheme of invading England, so far as its success depended on the junction of the Brest and Toulon fleets, was effectually baffled.

The Brest fleet was doomed to sustain a defeat still



more decisive. That force lay too near our shores for Hawke to risk letting it put to sea if he could help it; and accordingly he blockaded it from May till the end of October with such vigilance that, without venturing on a battle, Conflans saw that it was impossible for him to move. Here also the two fleets were nearly equal in strength, though again the slight difference which did exist was in our favour. Conflans had twenty-one sail of the line and four frigates; Hawke had twenty-three sail of the line and two frigates. At last, in the second week of November, a heavy storm drove the English fleet back to their own harbours; and, when the gale abated, Conflans took advantage of their absence to put to sea. Hawke returned to his station; but, as he was on his way, he fell in with the Gibraltar, and learnt that Conflans had escaped, and had been seen at about sixty miles from the coast, steering down the Bay of Biscay. Hawke judged at once that he was on his way to Quiberon, where a number of transports were known to be ready for sea: and thither he pursued him with every sail that he could carry. At first a strong breeze from the south-east drove him some way to the westward out of his desired course; but, on the 18th, the wind having changed to a more favorable quarter, he worked his way back towards the French coast, and his sagacity and energy soon had their reward. His conjecture that Quiberon was the enemy's object proved perfectly well founded; and, on the morning of the 20th, the Maidstone frigate, which had been sent forward on the look-out, made the signal for the enemy's fleet. They were between Belleisle and the mainland, steering northwards in pursuit of a squadron of English frigates, with which Commodore Duff had been blockading the transports in Quiberon and Morbihan Bay; but on seeing Hawke's fleet they altered their course, and bore away. Hawke at once made signal for seven of his ships, which were some distance ahead of the rest, to

chase, in hopes to detain the enemy till the rest of his fleet could come up. The chase lasted nearly five hours, every sail the ships could bear being set on both sides ; but the necessity under which the French Admiral was of keeping his ships together, at last enabled the English to overtake him ; and by half-past two our leading ships had got within range, and begun to open their fire. Conflans, though unable to escape, had succeeded in what was apparently his second object ; that of drawing on his pursuers among the islands and shoals to the south of Belleisle, on which, as the English pilots were necessarily unacquainted with the navigation, he reckoned as likely to prove a serious obstacle to Hawke's manœuvres. But the British Admiral overlooked that and every other consideration which could interfere with his main purpose of destroying the enemy he saw before him. Conflans led the flight ; and Hawke, having selected him for his own antagonist, passed by the other French ships, disregarding the fire with which they assailed him, and reserving his own. But, as he approached his foe, his pilot remonstrated with him, and declared that he could not reach the flagship without imminent danger of running on a shoal. " You have done your duty," replied Hawke, " in pointing out the danger : you are now to obey my orders, and lay me alongside *Le Soleil Royal*." Accordingly straight for the *Soleil Royal* the pilot steered. The French flagship had but eighty guns. The *Royal Sovereign*, Hawke's ship, carried a hundred : and one gallant Frenchman, the captain of the *Thesée*, 74, fearing lest his admiral should be overpowered by Hawke's superior fire, interposed as he came up, and sought to divert his attack, and to attract it upon himself. He rushed on his own destruction, without saving his chief. The *Thesée* sunk before a single broadside of the *Royal Sovereign*, and the *Soleil Royal* was soon entirely disabled, though daylight went down before she could be forced to surrender.

Another ship, the *Superbe*, 70, was also sunk; and two more, the *Formidable*, 80, and the *Héros*, 74, struck their colours. Many more would have been taken that day, had it not been for the early darkness. Soon after four, Hawke made the signal to anchor. His whole fleet was among islands and shoals, of whose bearing and extent he was entirely ignorant, and the wind was blowing fresh on a leeshore. In his despatch to the Admiralty, he declared that, if he had had but two hours more daylight, the whole French fleet must have been destroyed or taken. All that night the silence was from time to time broken by signals of distress, and neither fleet knew whether they proceeded from their comrades or from the enemy. Daybreak showed that both were interested in them. The *Héros*, which, though she had surrendered, had endeavoured to escape under cover of the night; and the *Soleil Royal*, which we have already spoken of as disabled, were both on shore; and with them was the English ship, *Resolution*, 74, which was soon ascertained to be hopelessly wrecked. Presently the *Essex*, 64, who had gone in to help her, and to destroy the *Soleil Royal*, also ran aground, and shared the fate of the *Resolution*. Greatly concerned at their disaster, Hawke sent in other ships to bring off their crews, and to destroy the two Frenchmen. They burnt the *Héros*, while her own crew set fire to the *Soleil Royal*; and with that achievement the battle ended. On the night of the 20th, one French division of nine ships put to sea and fled; and the next day those which remained behind effected their escape also into the River Villaine, whither, for want of pilots, Hawke did not dare to pursue them. He did, indeed, reconnoitre their position, and sounded the mouth of the river; but found it too shallow for even the smallest of his vessels. The French ships which had entered it had thrown their guns overboard to enable them to do so. He could not follow

that example, but he fitted up some of the longboats of his fleet as fireships, in order to burn them. But the wind which had been fresh throughout the action, now rose to such a height that it became necessary to relinquish that project also; and in the afternoon of the 23rd Hawke weighed anchor, and was glad to get his fleet clear of the shoals, and to conduct it safely into the open sea.

His retreat, however, did not save the French ships. It was subsequently found that in their eagerness to get out of the reach of Hawke's fire, they had gone so far up the Villaine that they could not get back. They had grounded, and were so firmly fixed on the shoals that their own crews were forced to destroy them. Of all that had sought that place of refuge, three only were ever again made serviceable; and of the whole fleet which Conflans had hoped to lead in unresisted triumph to our shores, the greater half was lost to his country for ever; while even those that had escaped were in no condition to be formidable to us for some time.

Hawke had scarcely regained the open sea when he received a reinforcement, which more than repaired the losses which he had sustained. Admiral Saunders, after co-operating with Wolfe in the expedition up the St. Lawrence, which the General crowned so gloriously by the battle of Quebec, was returning to England, when, at the entrance of the Channel, he heard that Hawke was in pursuit of Conflans.\* He had no orders to warrant such a step, his ships were foul, and his crews were greatly worn with their arduous toils in North America; but he slighted all these considerations in the hope of being of use to his countryman, and made all sail for Quiberon. On the 26th he joined Hawke, who was still lying off Belleisle, too late, indeed, to share his victory, but not too late for his own fame in the eyes of all who can honour well-directed energy, valour, and skill, even when fortune



deprives them of the harvest which they have deserved to reap.

M. Thurot met with a still worse fate than his brother admirals. All the summer Commodore Boys had blockaded him in Dunkirk as closely as Hawke had confined Conflans in Brest ; but the same gale that drove Hawke from his station, compelled Boys also to stand out to sea and leave the port open. The Frenchman profited by the moment to steal out, and, with five fine frigates, at once steered towards the north ; but Boys soon returned, and, having obtained correct information of his course, lost no time in pursuing him. Boys himself was a remarkable man. He had originally gone to sea in the service of the South-Sea Company, and, while so employed, the *Luxborough*, in which he was second mate, was destroyed by fire almost in the centre of the Atlantic. He, with twenty-two more, made their escape, if escape it could be called, in the yawl, without having time to secure one morsel of food or one drop of water. Neither had they mast, sail, nor compass. Yet, while thus more forlorn and destitute than perhaps any other company of human beings was ever left, they did not despair of safety, and some of them achieved it. They made one of the oars into a mast, of some of their shirts they made a sail, knotting together their garters for ropes and halyards. And as they believed Newfoundland to be nearly due north, they made for that point, guessing at their course by watching the sun and stars. Presently that resource deserted them ; for dense fogs came over them, which made sun and stars invisible. Then a heavy gale arose which threatened every moment to overwhelm them ; but at the same time fortunately drove them nearly along the path which they had proposed to themselves. Thus for thirteen days they proceeded, enduring an agony which no man who has not felt it can conceive, much less describe. It was mid-

summer; the heat was great: hunger and thirst soon began to do its work upon the weakest. Some died raving mad, crying out for water till their mouths got so swollen that they could no longer articulate. Many drank the salt water, but to most of them that proved worse than none. In the extremity of their anguish and despair, they even ate some of the flesh and drank the blood of their dead messmates before they threw them overboard. The least loathsome food that they got during the whole voyage was a single duck which they found dead on the waves, and which, though green and putrid, seemed to their famished appetites a morsel of epicurean relish. Their least offensive drink was procured while the fog lasted, by sucking the sail which had become saturated by it with moisture less parching than sea-water. The greater portion of them had already perished miserably, when, on the evening of the 7th of July they reached the very land they sought, arriving at Old St. Lawrence Harbour, in Newfoundland. For one of the handful that reached it, the relief came too late. The Captain died of exhaustion the next morning, and the survivors were reduced to six. Three-fourths of their whole number had died, and the survivors were so utterly prostrated that, had their sufferings been protracted for one day more, they believed that not one could have continued to resist them. To the day of his death, Boys passed the 7th of July in prayer and fasting, in grateful commemoration of his unparalleled deliverance. He subsequently entered the Royal service, and, after passing through the different inferior ranks, he was sent as commodore of a small squadron to blockade Dunkirk. Thurot had got too much start to be overtaken; but Boys pressed so closely on him that he was unable to attempt anything against the coast of Scotland, but was forced to take refuge in the Baltic, from whence he crept along the coast, and wintered at Bergen, in Norway. At the beginning of the next year, finding that his pursuer

had returned to the South, the Frenchman rounded the Orkneys, and though his squadron was dispersed in a storm, so that two never re-joined him, with the remaining three he proceeded to carry out his enterprise as it had originally been planned, and made one or two descents on the northern coast of Ireland, even taking Carrickfergus, where, though we had a garrison of half the 62nd regiment, that garrison had no ammunition. But this success proved fatal to him. The news of the presence of an enemy spread rapidly over the whole island, and reached Captain Elliott, who, with a small squadron of three frigates, was lying at Kinsale. He at once repaired to the eastern coast in search of Thurot, and a little to the south of Carrickfergus he met with him. In one respect no contest could be more equal. The three English frigates carried ninety-eight guns; the three French frigates carried one hundred. But in men, or rather in the number of men, the enemy had a decided advantage; their joint crews amounting to twelve hundred and fifty men, and ours to seven hundred. But this superiority availed them nothing. After a combat of an hour and a half, the whole squadron struck their colours. They had lost three hundred men, including Thurot himself, who fell by one of the last shots which was fired in the action; our killed and wounded amounted to no more than thirty-six. Elliott, with his prizes, put into Ramsay Harbour to repair the damages he had sustained, and received high praises, which were richly deserved, both by the importance of the service he had done, and by the skill and gallantry which he had personally displayed.

The successes thus gained had grown out of defensive operations. But on the western side of the Atlantic our exploits of offensive warfare were equally triumphant. In the first month of the year, Commodore Moore, with nine sail of the line and one frigate, escorting a small army under General Hopson, sailed on an expedition against

the French possessions in the Caribbee Islands. Their first object was Martinique. The ships took up their position in front of Fort Royal, which was the principal town of the island, and the troops were landed without opposition ; but, on a closer examination, the commanders agreed in thinking the fortifications too strong for the force they had with them, and they decided on rather proceeding against Guadaloupe. This second enterprise afforded a great triumph to the fleet. The capital town of that island is Basseterre, off which, on the 23rd of January, Moore cast anchor, and again the principal engineer of the army pronounced the fortifications unassailable by the ships ; but this time Moore was of a different opinion, and soon proved the correctness of his own judgment. He laid the ships close under the walls, and battered them with such effect, that in a single day he silenced the fire of the citadel and the principal batteries, blew up the chief powder-magazine, captured the vessels which lay in the roads, and which in vain attempted to escape ; and the next day the town surrendered, and the soldiers landed and hoisted British colours on the walls. The interior of the island afforded so many posts suitable for resistance to an invader, that it was more than three months before the last body of French troops was finally defeated ; but at last, by the beginning of May, the complete conquest of the island was effected, and its fall drew along with it that of the other French islands in the neighbourhood.

The war still continued, but was carried on during the next year, 1760, with no great vigour. The French fleets were so daunted by Hawke's and Boscawen's victories, that they did not venture to put to sea ; and in Europe our achievements were confined to actions between single vessels, in which we were generally victorious, though the very number of our successes renders it impossible to enumerate them. The only exploits on a larger scale were performed in the East and West Indies. In



the East, Admiral Stevens had succeeded Pocock, and, continuing to co-operate with the army with the same cordiality as that gallant officer, contributed greatly to the success with which General Cote was extirpating the French power in the Carnatic. He blockaded Carrical, and forced it to surrender. By an act of daring which made an especial impression on the native Indians, he cut out two French frigates that had taken shelter in the harbour of Pondicherry; and, though in the course of the siege the fleet was attacked by a hurricane almost unprecedented even in those stormy seas, in which some of the ships were lost with all their crews, even that disaster procured the French but a brief respite. Stevens quickly returned to his post, preventing any attempt to throw supplies by sea into the beleaguered city; and when, before the end of January, 1761, Pondicherry surrendered, the Admiral shared the honours of the triumphant entry with Coote, as he had already shared with him the labours and dangers of the siege.

In the West Indies, too, and on the North American station we enjoyed a series of uninterrupted triumphs. One French squadron fell in with the fleet under Admiral Holmes, and, of the five ships which composed it, four were taken or destroyed. At the mouth of the St. Lawrence, Commodore Byron captured the whole of another squadron; Lord Colville, with five sail of the line, entering the St. Lawrence, barred that great river against the attempts of the enemy to convey supplies to their army, which was toiling in vain to recover Quebec, thus compelled that army to raise the siege; while Captain Deane conducted a squadron of small vessels up the stream as far as Montreal. We also built some sloops and schooners to cruise up and down the lakes, and this establishment of our naval force along the whole water-frontier of the province contributed powerfully to its conquest, which was completed in the autumn by the

capitulation of all the French troops that it contained, who were allowed to return to France on the condition of not serving against us during the remainder of the war.

In October, 1760, George II. died; but at first his death produced no alteration in the policy of the country; the war was still continued, though both France and England appeared to be weary of it; but as far as the navy was concerned, the scene was so far changed that the most important exploit of the year was achieved in Europe. Pitt himself, though, as he scrupled not to confess in his place in Parliament, "a lover of honourable war," was aware of the growing desire of the nation for peace; and, with a view of enabling us to conclude one on more favourable terms, he revived his attacks on the French coast, and projected an expedition to capture Belleisle, with the view of exchanging it for Minorca. The expedition which, with this object, he fitted out, was on a scale which seemed to render all opposition hopeless. At the beginning of April, ten thousand soldiers under General Hodgson were escorted to the scene of action by Commodore Keppel, who had under his command a fleet of ten sail of the line and eight frigates, besides smaller vessels. Yet so heroic was the resistance of the French garrison that, though the landing of our troops was effected without much difficulty, they repulsed those who made the first attack with heavy loss, killing nearly five hundred, and compelling them to leave behind them many prisoners. The fleet was more successful, and silenced the forts which commanded the bay of Port Andro; and the next day the army retrieved its previous discomfiture. Taught by experience to appreciate the valour of the enemy and the strength of their position, Hodgson now landed his men at different points of the island, and advanced to make a triple attack, for which the garrison were unprepared, and which, indeed, they had not numbers sufficient to oppose. Driven from the forts and the

strong ground near the sea, the governor, M. de St. Croix, collected his forces, and retired into the citadel, which he resolved to hold out till the last, in expectation of succour from the mainland. Here Hodgson besieged him in form, while Keppel surrounded the island with his ships, and effectually cut it off from the continent and from all hope of relief. Still M. de St. Croix made a heroic defence : he raised fresh works, constructed new batteries ; sometimes he became himself the assailant, sallying out upon the besiegers' trenches, driving back the soldiers : on one occasion even taking General Crawford prisoner, and sending him and his staff in triumph to Paris. It was not till the 7th of June, two months after the besiegers had first arrived at Belleisle, that the gallant M. de St. Croix acknowledged himself overpowered, and consented to treat for the surrender of the stronghold he had so well defended. Hodgson and Keppel knew how to respect such valour, and granted him the most honorable terms. The relics of the garrison marched out through the breach made by our cannon, and were conveyed to their own country. Since the beginning of the siege, they had lost nearly a thousand men, and had inflicted upon their conquerors a loss but slightly inferior. Our troops also returned home ; but before doing so they again landed on the Isle of Aix, and for the third time destroyed the fortifications, which had been repaired with great care since Hawke's last visit. We placed a strong garrison in Belleisle, and left a squadron to cruise around it and about the Basque Roads, to prevent any attempt of the French to recover it ; and then the General and the Commodore returned to England.

Belleisle was not the only island which our fleets this year brought under our dominion. Sir James Douglas, who was our commodore on the station of the Leeward Islands, in the course of the summer conducted his squadron, with a small body of troops under the command

of Lord Rollo, against Dominica. At the peace of 1748 this island had been declared neutral ; but the inhabitants showed such unvarying partiality to the French, and unfriendliness to ourselves, that our Government conceived itself fully justified in disregarding its nominal neutrality, and treating it as a French settlement. In fact, the governor, most of the principal authorities, and the greater part of the garrison were Frenchmen. It was fortified with some strength, and the heights above the chief town afforded many facilities for defence ; but still it was in no condition to make a long resistance to such a force as was now brought against it. Douglas battered the town from his ships, while Lord Rollo stormed it with his grenadiers. The island became ours with the loss of only six men killed and wounded, while its conquest was but a forerunner of the still more important acquisitions in the same region to which the same officers contributed in the subsequent summer.

The next year was of a more remarkable character. In the autumn of 1761 the negociations for peace, which had been carried on for some time, were broken off, through the undue arrogance of the pretensions put forward by France, which were firmly rejected by Pitt, who loudly declared that, while he remained in office, no second Peace of Utrecht should stain the annals of this country. France, however, still eager for peace, which indeed was becoming indispensable to her, thought to extort it from us, and to compel us to her terms, by doubling the number of our enemies ; and she felt the more sure of succeeding when, at the end of the year, it became known that Pitt, who had hitherto had the entire conduct of the war, had retired from office. Her expectation of peace was realized, but not in the manner she had expected. Spain entered the lists as her ally ; but this augmentation of our foes only excited us to a more than



commensurate degree of exertion to encounter them. And the heavy blows which, in the course of a few short months, we dealt our new antagonist, crippled her resources to the extent of almost disabling her for the future; while France, too, was stripped of some of her most valuable colonial possessions, and found herself every day less able to retaliate.

War was declared between Great Britain and Spain in the first week of the new year, and no event which had taken place up to that time, perhaps no event in his whole career, displays the statesmanlike abilities of Pitt in an equally favourable light. In the negotiations for peace, which had been broken off, he had with dignified firmness repressed the attempts of the French Cabinet to import a consideration of Spanish affairs and interests into the discussion; and when, in September, he received certain information of the conclusion by the two countries of a treaty unfriendly to us, he proposed to his colleagues instantly to declare war against Spain, and to send out a squadron to intercept the galleons which would soon be bearing to her ports the yearly produce of her western settlements. His advice was rejected, and he resigned; but within a very few weeks his arguments were borne out by the conduct of Spain itself, which, as it was then seen, had only preserved civility or moderation in her language so long as an opposite behaviour might have imperilled her treasure-fleet; and which, as soon as that was safe in her ports, began to show her real disposition towards us in a way that a due regard for our honour permitted no ministry to brook. Pitt had now the triumph of seeing the designs which his colleagues had so lately rejected adopted by them, not only in their outline, but even in their details; and the further gratification of beholding the successful execution of those details lead to the end he had in view, of humbling our arrogant

but inconsiderate enemy, and compelling her to sue for a restoration of that peace which she had so lately and so wantonly renounced.

The war, as far as we were concerned, was still of course, carried on mainly by sea; and the mere enumeration of the names of the admirals whom we this year appointed to the chief commands is sufficient to show how vast was our preponderance on that element. Hawke, Pocock, Rodney, and Saunders had no rivals, whether in professional skill or in warlike hardihood; and, in the next rank, if Byron, Keppel, Howe, and Jervis had as yet an inferior reputation, it was chiefly because they were younger men, and had not hitherto had equal opportunities of earning fame. They had given abundant promise of their future eminence which subsequent wars were destined to realise; and all have left names still remembered with honour, and examples still looked up to as worthy of all imitation. To these men, then, this year was the honour of the British navy entrusted. Hawke's operations were of the least conspicuous, but not, in reality, of the least effective character. He failed, indeed, to overtake a squadron which had been sent out from Brest to attack Newfoundland, and which had gained the open sea before he quitted Spithead; but his mere appearance with a fleet in the Tagus proved sufficient to protect Lisbon: against which city Spain, who had not yet given up the hope of some day reuniting Portugal to her dominions, had persuaded France to combine with her in an attack to be carried on by land and sea. Portugal, by herself, was of course wholly unable to resist so formidable a combination; and such a blow as the occupation of the capital of our ally by the enemy would have laid us under the necessity either of continuing the war, or of purchasing peace by large and degrading cessions. But from such a disastrous alternative we were delivered by Hawke and his squadron, for it hardly de-

served the name of a fleet; and in the discussions of the conditions of peace, which were renewed in the autumn, no concessions could be demanded from us on the ground of the weakness or misfortunes of Portugal.

In the Mediterranean Sir Charles Saunders was equally unable to distinguish himself by any striking success; nor would the period of his command furnish us with a single event to commemorate, had it not been for an extraordinary piece of good fortune which befel the *Acteon* frigate of twenty-eight guns and an eighteen-gun sloop, the *Favourite*. They were cruising off Cadiz, when they met the Spanish galleon *Hermione* coming from Lima. She was ignorant of the existence of war, and unprepared for any attack, so that she had no choice but to surrender. The captors expected to find her rich, but the treasures she contained far exceeded their most sanguine anticipations, and the prize-money that fell to their share seems entitled to a special record from its unparalleled amount. There was not a man concerned who, if his station in life be considered, did not receive enough to make him rich and independent for life. The admiral and captains received sixty-five thousand pounds apiece, thirteen thousand pounds fell to each lieutenant; warrant-officers got above four thousand pounds, petty-officers nearly two thousand pounds, and even the shares of the common seamen amounted to nearly five hundred pounds a man. If the reports which at the time amused the seaport-towns were well-founded, it may be feared that the last-mentioned class did not derive much permanent benefit from their good-fortune. On the contrary, amazed at suddenly finding themselves possessors of a sum of money such as they had never beheld even in their dreams, they turned their whole attention to the speediest means of getting rid of so unusual and unexpected an encumbrance. They bought up all the watches at Portsmouth, and fried them over the galley-fire; they passed a formal resolution making a gold-laced

hat a necessary part of every sailor's equipment, and were only restrained from inflicting summary punishment on one unhappy wight, who appeared in one ornamented only with silver, by his assurance that he did not go to the hatter's till the more costly articles were all gone, but that he had made the man take the money for a gold-laced hat all the same. In such follies even the riches of the *Hermione* were quickly dissipated, and the crews of the victorious British ships were again brought into that state of readiness for enterprise of any kind which is engendered by the consciousness of an empty pocket. Such, indeed, was too long the fate of the British sailor. He was, and is, by nature liberal and unsuspicious ; and the whole system of former days seemed as if it had been devised on purpose to turn those very virtues into misfortunes. He received a small advance of pay to tempt him to join a ship, after that, till the ship was paid off, he never received a farthing from the Government ; and, for everything he wanted, his only resource, his only tradesman, his banker, was the purser, who (pursers, at that time, were generally a most inferior class of men) made him pay the most usurious and exorbitant interest for credit for the most absolute necessities, and much more for such money as he advanced him on loan. Then, when paid off, he had at least three, and sometimes five years' wages to receive at once ; with no savings' banks in which to deposit them, no friends who might counsel him as to its disposal, no home to which to repair, who can wonder that he became the easy prey of Jews and crimps, and of worse still, if there could be worse, who fastened upon him as long as he had a farthing to be robbed of ; so that he never felt really happy, or free, or respectable till he had nothing left, and had gone on board some new ship again to earn money at the risk of limb and life, in order again to be fleeced of it. The modern sailor has fallen on better times. He draws his pay at reasonable



intervals ; he is treated by his superior officers and by his Government as a reasonable being ; he has facilities afforded him for laying by his earnings, whether wages or prize money, On his return to England he finds at nearly every port a Seaman's Home, where he can wait comfortably and respectably till he is ready again to go to sea. He has the option of permanent enlistment, a system which is not more beneficial to the service than it is to himself : and, from having been the most neglected he is now, for his rank of life, probably the best cared for servant of the British Crown.

But if we achieved no visible triumphs in Europe, the case was very different in America and Asia. Pitt, when he first urged the propriety of commencing hostilities against Spain, had projected attacks upon her richest strongholds in both hemispheres, upon the Philippine Isles, and upon Cuba ; and both these plans were adopted by his successor. The moment war was declared, Sir George Pocock, who had returned from India immediately after his last battle with M. d'Aché, and had been rewarded with the order of the Bath for his gallantry, was sent out to attack the Havannah. Of all the foreign settlements of Spain Cuba was the richest, and the Havannah, though not in name the capital of the island, was yet rendered by the greatness of its commerce and the unrivalled excellence of its harbour by far its most important city. It was not only the port at which the treasure-ships yearly assembled for their return to Spain, and the storehouse for every kind of commercial wealth, but it also contained an arsenal and dockyard of great magnitude, where many of the finest ships in the Spanish navy were built. It boasted of a population of fifty thousand free citizens, who carried the ostentation of their wealth and the luxury of their manners to a height equalled in no part of the mother country. The defences of this great city were hardly equal to its importance.

There were, indeed, strong forts and numerous batteries, bristling with above three hundred and fifty heavy guns ; but they were too exclusively directed towards the sea. Little preparation had been made to resist attacks which might be brought against the city from the landward side ; and on that side the walls themselves, though high and apparently strong, were not in an uniform state of repair. Nor was the garrison, which, including militia, did not exceed twenty thousand men, sufficient thoroughly to protect ramparts of so wide a circuit. The fleet too, of twelve sail of the line and three frigates, and which, if skilfully used, might have formed no inconsiderable addition to the strength of the fortifications, was rendered useless through the means which had been adopted to blockup the harbour against the assailants. Still, the reduction of such a place was an arduous enterprise, and the means placed at Pocock's disposal were not disproportioned to its difficulty or to its importance. As it was desired to avoid giving Spain any suspicion of our object he sailed from England with only a small squadron ; but he had authority, when he should arrive at his destination, to take under his command the squadrons already in that neighbourhood, which it was calculated, would together make up a force abundantly sufficient. In fact, when he had collected them all, they amounted to twenty-six sail of the line and fifteen frigates ; forming such a fleet as no nation had ever sent to those waters. It was to be joined by an army of fourteen thousand men under the command of the Earl of Albemarle. The preliminary arrangements were all carried out as they had been planned ; and (as by a piece of combined vigilance and good fortune, Rodney who had the command of the Leeward Islands station, had captured the vessel which was conveying to the governors of the different Spanish settlements the intelligence of the declaration of war) the Governor, Don Juan

de Prado, had no suspicion of his danger when, on the 6th of June, the formidable fleet of his assailants was seen in the offing. Including transports and store ships, it numbered nearly two hundred sail; and the Admiral had already shown no inconsiderable skill in conducting such an armament through the narrow and perilous Straits of Bahama without a single accident. He had also not been without omens of success, as Captain Alms, of the *Alarm*, 32, had fallen in with the Spanish *Thetis*, 22, and *Phenix*, 18, and after a gallant action, had captured them both. The enormous wealth which the *Havannah* was reported to contain had so excited both the fleet and the army that they stood in no great need of further encouragement, but this trifling success was not without its effect in increasing their contempt for the enemy and their confidence in their own prowess.

Pocock's flagship was the *Namur*, 90; his second in command was Commodore Keppel, whose broad pennant flew in the *Valiant*, 74; and the Captain of the *Valiant* was an officer whose consummate wisdom and humanity, shown at a later period under the most trying circumstances, scarcely needed the addition of a great victory to place him high among our naval heroes, Adam Duncan. To Keppel the task of conducting the disembarkation of the troops was entrusted, and that gallant officer, well aware how much, in such enterprises, success depends on celerity of movement above all things, lost no time in carrying out his portion of the duty. The very next moment the soldiers were moved at daybreak from the ships into flat-bottomed boats prepared on purpose. Two of the smaller frigates preceded them, and, with their guns, routed a body of Spanish troops that had been collected on the shore; and then the whole army was disembarked without opposition, and the siege was commenced. The brunt of it fell on the army. The entrance to the harbour was at all times narrow, and

now the Spaniards had entirely blocked it up by sinking some large ships in it, so that our fleet was wholly unable to approach the city itself. It bore its part, as may be imagined, on the one or two occasions that offered, in the cannonade of the outer forts; and in one most important attack that was made on the Moro, the three ships that were particularly engaged, the Dragon, the Cambridge, and the Marlborough, all of the line, suffered the heaviest loss that was sustained on any day during the whole period of the operations. The chief strength of the place lay in the castle of El Moro, which commanded the mouth of the harbour, was built on a rock of great height and steepness, and was fortified with batteries of the heaviest artillery then known. On this fort all the exertions both of the besiegers and the besieged were concentrated for upwards of seven weeks. The commandant, Don Lewis de Velasco, was a Spaniard of the old school: chivalrous, utterly fearless, and full of resources. Such a man was sure to have a garrison worthy of him, and the resistance he made was so stubborn that it long held the victory in suspense. More than once the heavy continued cannonade which he kept up disabled our guns, and even set fire to the batteries which our troops had erected on the land; nor was it till our General had recourse to mines, and by their explosion had made a practicable breach in the walls, that we were secure of our triumph. Even then Velasco's courage was not subdued. At the head of his men he met the stormers in the breach, and fell sword in hand. His second in command, the Marquis Gonzales, was also slain; and the prisoners who were taken did not amount to half the original number of the garrison. When El Moro had fallen, the rest of our work was comparatively easy. That had baffled us for above seven weeks; the whole of the remaining forts did not hold out a fortnight. El Moro had been stormed on the 30th of July, and on the 11th of August the Governor hung out



a flag of truce, and proposed to surrender the whole city. The terms were soon agreed on, and on the 14th we took possession. Our loss had been heavy; the army alone had lost nearly eighteen hundred men, and the number of killed and wounded in the fleet, though much smaller, was yet very considerable. It is painful to think that the greater part of this loss might, in all probability, have been avoided. In spite of his success, the skill of the general was severely criticised, and the ablest judges pronounced that, if the first attack had been made on the city itself instead of upon El Moro, it must equally have fallen in a few days; and that then the fort also, being wholly cut off, must have surrendered without attempting a resistance, which indeed, after the fall of the city itself, would have been without an object. Still, though it might have been better to win it at a lighter cost, it was a noble prize that had been won. Spain had long looked upon the Havannah as the most brilliant jewel in her colonial crown, and thus to lose it in the very first year of war was an unquestionable proof of her inability to maintain against us the contest into which she had so rashly entered.

The loss of the Havannah was not the only calamity which Fortune had in store for her. In the East, Manilla, the capital of Luzon, the principal of the Philippine Isles, occupied the same important position with respect to her Asiatic trade that the Havannah filled in America. Luzon itself is an extensive island, nearly twice as large as Ireland: its climate is fine, its soil fertile to a degree unknown in our colder latitudes; and Manilla had long been the *depôt* where the produce of the rich commerce with China and Japan was stored for transmission to America and Europe. We have seen how the capture of the galleon, which yearly sailed with this freight to Mexico, was reckoned an object of no secondary importance in Anson's expedition; and it was well known that the wealth thus sent away was far from exhausting the

riches of the great city and of its merchant princes. Admiral Cornish had lately succeeded to the command of the British fleet on the Indian station : and the same vessel which conveyed to him the intelligence of the declaration of war against Spain, bore him also orders to co-operate with a land-force that was about to set out for the reduction of Manilla. It happened that a short time before Colonel Draper, a distinguished military officer who had been for some years serving in India, finding his health fail, had gone on a voyage to China in the hope of recovering it. While in that country he had heard many stories of the riches of Manilla, and also of its defenceless state ; since, as it was nearly the most distant spot on the whole earth from Spain, the Spaniards trusted that that distance alone was sufficient to protect it from attack. It was, indeed, fortified with many of the latest improvements of engineering science, but the Spanish garrison did not amount to eight hundred men, and, though they had the co-operation of a numerous army of native Indians who fought in their service with the greatest zeal and the most dauntless resolution, their ignorance of European tactics and the inferiority of their weapons (for they were chiefly armed with bows and arrows) prevented their being any match for English soldiers and sailors. Draper, to whom the credit of projecting the enterprise is principally due, had the principal part of its execution committed to him, being placed in command of the land-force employed, which sailed from Madras at the beginning of August. Cornish had previously sent forward a frigate to the Straits of Malacca to intercept any vessels which might carry to Manilla the news of its impending danger. His precaution fully succeeded, and, when on the 23rd of September the fleet anchored in Manilla Bay, it found the Spaniards entirely unprepared. In promptness of action the commanders imitated the captors of the Havannah. The next morning they began to land the troops, and summoned the city ;

but when their summons was answered by a note of defiance, they avoided the error into which their comrades in the west had fallen, and, instead of expending their strength on an outwork, they directed their first attack against the city itself. For, like El Moro at the Havannah, so here a strongly fortified suburb and citadel called Cavete commanded the entrance to the inner harbour, and was trusted in as the principal defence of the city ; but Cornish and Draper resolved to show the Spaniards that it must only share its fall, without being able to avert it. The disembarkation of the troops severely taxed the skill of the naval officers. Cornish's flag-captain was one whose singular and unhappy death subsequently gave a melancholy notoriety to his name, Richard Kempenfelt.\* On him the principal arrangements for the landing devolved, and to his great exertions its success under the most discouraging circumstances was attributable; for the opposition of the enemy was formidable, their fire very heavy, while the wind, which was freshening every moment, raised so violent a surf that many of the boats were dashed to pieces, though fortunately very few lives were lost. Presently the rain began to fall in torrents, the sea became rougher, and it was evident that the monsoon had begun. Though our land-force did not exceed thirteen hundred men, to whom Cornish had added a naval brigade of a thousand sailors and marines, yet so great were the obstacles thus interposed to our enterprise, that the landing was not completed till the morning of the 26th ; but the soldiers as they landed began to occupy favorable posts, and to throw up works, and, before the last boats had reached the shore, their comrades had commenced their cannonade of the city.

According to the Spaniards, they were not mortal enemies alone with whom their besiegers had to contend.

\* See p. 392.

The commandant of the garrison was the Marquis of Villa Medina, but the governor was the Archbishop of Manilla, who united to his holy office the dignity of Captain-General of the Philippine Isles. And, as on a former occasion his countrymen in Europe had sought to add celestial to human resources, by appointing St. James to the colonelcy of a regiment, so now the warlike prelate encouraged his garrison by assurances that the Angel of the Lord was himself coming to their assistance ; and that, as he had formerly smitten the impious host of Sennacherib, so was he now whetting his sword against the heretical battalions of King George. Unsuspicious of the combination thus forming against them, the British pushed on their operations with great vigour. Whenever the wind abated the fleet stood in and joined in the cannonade, though the water near the shore was so shallow that their fire caused more alarm than real injury ; but the naval brigade on shore bore their full part in the toils of the enterprise, and, as the list of casualties showed, in its dangers also. On one occasion their encampment was made the object of a vigorous united attack by the Spaniards and their Indian auxiliaries ; but the 79th regiment came to their support, and they repulsed their assailants with heavy loss. At last, on the 5th of October, only ten days after the first commencement of the siege, it was pronounced that we had made a practical breach in the walls. Once more the garrison was summoned, but, as they refused to surrender, at daybreak on the following morning the storming parties moved to the assault, and, after an hour of conflict and carnage, the city was ours. The judgment of the commanders in directing their first efforts against it, was fully established by the surrender of the citadel of Cavete without a shot being fired against it. And the submission of Manilla carried with it also that of all the other islands over which Luzon and its capital claimed a paramount authority. Four millions of dollars were



exacted from the city itself, as the ransom of the public and private treasures which it contained; and by the evening of the 6th complete order was re-established under the British flag.

The heavy blows had thus this year fallen upon Spain; but France was by no means exempted from her share of the calamities of war. Besides Pocock's force, Rodney also, as has been already mentioned, had a strong fleet on the station of the Leeward Islands; and a powerful army under General Moncton was sent out to co-operate with him in an attack on Martinique. That fertile island was the most flourishing of all the French settlements in that part of the world; it was the chief seat of their West Indian government, as of their commerce, and possessed, in Rodney's opinion, the finest harbours in those seas. We had failed in an attempt upon it in 1759, which had only served as a warning to the enemy to strengthen their defences and augment their garrison. The governor was M. de la Touche, an officer of deservedly high reputation; and our ministers, well aware that its reduction would require no ordinary force, had made preparations adequate to the greatness of the enterprise. The army fell little short of fourteen thousand men. The fleet consisted of eighteen sail of the line, fourteen frigates, and nine sloops and smaller vessels. On the 7th of January, 1762, this great armament reached the island; but so scanty was the information which had been supplied to the commanders respecting the amount of the garrison, the strength of the fortifications, or even the natural character of the island, that some little time was lost in deciding where to commence our attack, and in retracing our steps after one or two operations which, however well conducted, were not calculated to have any influence on the main enterprise. The greatness of the force at his disposal enabled the Admiral to threaten several points at the same time.

Captain Hervey, in the *Dragon*, silenced some batteries in one quarter. Commodore Swanton, with a small squadron, mastered those in another. Rodney himself, with the main fleet, destroyed all the fortifications in St. Anne's Bay. But after a few days the true point of attack was discovered. Port Royal was the strongest place in the island, and on the 16th the troops were landed on the western side of the bay of the same name, at a distance of about four miles from the town; and Moncton at once began to direct his attacks upon two strongly-fortified heights called Mont Garnier and Mont Tortenson, which were among the most important defences of Port Royal. An equally formidable outwork was a steep rock a short distance from the shore, called Pigeon Island, which was surmounted by a citadel armed with artillery of the largest calibre. This the fleet cannonaded from time to time, but the fort was placed at too great a height for our fire to do it much harm, and Rodney's object was merely to distract the enemy's attention, and so to embarrass their exertions for the defence of the forts on the land. Here also a naval brigade was called into action. As the greaterpart of the ships were without employment, the Admiral drafted from their crews a thousand blue-jackets, and sent them to aid the soldiers in constructing their batteries. Their energy astonished the whole army, and one of the officers drew a lively picture of them, working harder than all the dray-horses in London,\* dragging cannon and mortars, carriages and all, up the heights, without any regard to the steepness of the rocks or the weight of the burden, huzzaing and hallowing, sometimes up hill, sometimes down hill, sometimes tumbling over the stones, sometimes sticking in the mire, far from choice in their language, or particular as to the object of the imprecations which they lavished around them, but

\* See a Letter from an officer of one of the light infantry regiments, quoted in Mundy's 'Life of Rodney,' vol. i. p. 74.

equally regardless of danger or death, and resolved to do their work without delay, and in despite of whatever obstacles Spaniard, Pope, Pretender, or even worse enemies might raise to thwart them. Against an army and fleet working together in such a spirit all resistance was vain. Mont Tortenson soon fell; and, as the batteries on it commanded a great portion of the town of Port Royal, Moncton availed himself of the advantage he had already obtained to secure greater, and turned the guns of the Spaniards against themselves. He began at the same time to direct his own batteries against Mont Garnier, the height and steepness of which threatened to make its reduction a work of great difficulty, when luckily the rashness of the garrison itself came to his aid. Thinking that a successful attack upon the English batteries might enable them also to recover Mont Tortenson, they made a desperate sally on our works; but the English who manned the batteries, and of whom no small portion belonged to the naval brigade, not only repelled the attack, but turned the tables on their assailants, pursued them when they fled, and finally entered the chief redoubt in Mont Garnier with them, and captured that stronghold. Our possession of these two heights rendered Port Royal itself utterly untenable by the enemy; and on the 3rd of February, within three weeks from the first landing of the troops, it surrendered. While the negotiation respecting the terms of the capitulation was going on, the governor retreated with a portion of the garrison to St. Pierre, a strong town on the opposite side of the island. But his retreat did not save him. The moment that the fall of Port Royal was ascertained, Rodney had sent a squadron, under Captain Hervey, round to the Bay of La Trinité. Hervey at once landed a body of seamen, and seized the forts commanding that harbour. His success was decisive of the fate of St. Pierre, and the first exercise of his authority which M. de la Touche

could put forth after his arrival at that town was to offer to surrender it. The capture of these two towns was equivalent to the reduction of the whole island. But the French were to suffer further losses still. Even before Martinique had fallen, Rodney had sent a squadron against Grenada, where, when the governor talked of resistance, the inhabitants rose against him, and compelled him to submit; and the joint commanders had hardly made arrangements for distributing a sufficient garrison among the different forts of their new conquest, when Rodney detached Captain Hervey with a second division of his ships against Sainte Lucie. Hervey, who had distinguished himself greatly in all the operations against Martinique, was resolved not to fail now that he was in an independent command. At the same time he had no information whatever concerning the fortifications or the garrison of the island against which he was thus sent. Nevertheless information he was determined to have, and he obtained it at no slight personal risk. He sent a lieutenant in full uniform to summon M. de Longueville, the governor, to surrender; and, having dressed himself like a midshipman (his fair complexion and beardless face giving him an appearance of extreme youth), he accompanied the lieutenant in the character of interpreter, and in this disguise reconnoitred the fort in person. The next day he brought his ships close under the walls of the town, and the governor surrendered. St. Vincent's was taken with even less trouble, and thus the French were completely driven from all these islands.

Rodney had hardly completed these conquests when he was forced to call in all his squadrons, by intelligence which reached him that Admiral de Blenac was sailing against him with a fine fleet fresh from the harbours of France. At the same time he received urgent entreaties from Jamaica, whither news of M. de Blenac's approach had also arrived, entreating him to come to the protection



of that important island. Rodney provided for both objects: he detached Sir James Douglas as Commodore with a sufficient squadron to ensure the safety of Jamaica; and he himself, with the main body of the fleet, moved into the open sea, in the hope of encountering M. de Blenac before he reached the islands. But, though he was destined hereafter to win glorious laurels in these waters, it was not to be yet. With all his exertions he could not fall in with his intended foe, and the reduction of these islands was his last exploit in this war.

In one quarter, and in one only, Fortune seemed this year to smile on the French: but it was only for a moment, and their brief success eventually led to their greater discomfiture. They had secretly equipped at Brest a small squadron of two ships of the line and two frigates, under the command of Admiral de Ternay, which, as we have already mentioned, eluded Hawke's pursuit, and reached the other side of the Atlantic in safety. Their aim was Newfoundland: but on their way they had nearly taken a prize of at least equal value; for they had not been many days at sea when they fell in with a splendid fleet of East Indiamen, West Indiamen, and vessels engaged in our North American trade. They were nearly a hundred in number, the value of their cargoes was unusually great, and they were trusted to the convoy of Captain Rowley, who, besides his own ship, the *Superb*, 74, had but two frigates, the *Gosport*, 44, Captain Jervis, and the *Danae*, 38, Captain Marsh, to aid him in his laborious and important duty. Unequal as his force was to that of the enemy, Rowley did not shrink from the conflict. He signalled to the merchantmen to pursue their voyage with all speed, and, with his own ship and the frigates, formed a line of battle to encounter the French Admiral. In spite of his great superiority of force, M. de Ternay would not fight: on the contrary, he hoisted all sail and fled; and Rowley pursued him for a time, till the necessity

of rejoining the merchantmen compelled him to relinquish the chase. The Frenchman reached St. John's on the 24th of June, landed fifteen hundred troops whom he had on board, and easily captured that town, which was in no condition to resist a force of such magnitude. But they made no further conquest. Captain Graves, the governor of the island, was at Placentia when St. John's fell. He at once sent intelligence of what had happened to Lord Colville, who was lying off Halifax in the Northumberland, 70, and to General Amherst, who was in command of our military force at New York. Lord Colville at once hastened to his assistance with his own ship, and with the Gosport, which had just joined him ; and General Amherst collected a small force of soldiers by drafts from the different garrisons along the coast, and sent that also to St. John's under the command of his own brother, Colonel W. Amherst. It was the 11th of September before the Colonel reached Newfoundland and joined Lord Colville, who by that time had received a reinforcement of two more frigates ; and the two commanders at once commenced operations with a vigour that made up for the inferiority of their force. Colville blockaded M. de Ternay in the harbour, while Amherst cut off two or three detachments of the French soldiers which were ravaging the adjacent country, erected batteries against the town, and within five days had made such progress that he was able to summon it to surrender. The French Commander, M. de Haussonville, talked loudly of his resolution to defend the town to the last extremity, and even hinted at blowing it up in preference to yielding it. But Amherst told him plainly that he had the means of compelling him to surrender, and that if the town were destroyed every Frenchman should be put to the sword. With so plain-spoken a foe there was no alternative ; M. de Haussonville surrendered. Unfortunately one of those dense fogs which are common in those waters enabled M.

de Ternay to escape : but the disaster of the spring was completely retrieved, and the French power in that region was broken more completely than ever.

The recovery of St. John's was the last exploit in this war. The same month of September saw the formal opening of negociations for peace, for which Lord Bute, who was at this time prime minister, showed a restless impatience, which gave our conquered enemies a great advantage in the discussions. The terms which were ultimately agreed upon were not unfavourable to us, if compared with our position at the beginning of the war ; but they were certainly inadequate to the exertions which we had made, or to the successes which we had obtained. We retained Canada and Cape Breton, and received back Minorca in exchange for Belleisle ; but we gave back Guadaloupe, Martinique, Saint Lucie, and Goree, without receiving any equivalent for them ; and in India we restored Pondicherry, and the other places which we had taken from the French, on the condition that they should for the future construct no new fortifications, and keep no troops in Bengal. To Spain we restored Havannah, only exacting in return the cession of Florida, though its inferior importance was not denied by the Minister even while he accepted it. Manilla, too, was given up under a general article, which comprehended any conquests made by either side, of which the news had not yet reached Europe.

On these terms the preliminaries of peace were agreed on the first week in November ; the definitive treaty, known in history as the Peace of Paris, was signed on the 10th of February, 1763. And for some years the contending nations had leisure to turn their thoughts from the work of mutual destruction, to the more beneficial employment of developing and augmenting their individual resources, and, by intellectual labour and scientific research, promoting the enlightenment and welfare of the world in general.

## CHAPTER XIII.

1764—1780.

Voyages of discovery—Question as to the existence of a great Southern Continent—Byron's voyage—Early career of Captain James Cook—His first Voyage in 1768—His arrival at Otaheite and the rest of the Society Isles—Visits New Zealand, New South Wales, Java—Lightning conductors—His second voyage in 1772—Fields of ice in the Southern Ocean—He revisits New Zealand and the Society Islands—Returning to the South, is stopped by ice in Lat.  $71^{\circ}$  S.—Colossal statues in Easter Island—Visits the Marquesas, Otaheite, the Friendly Islands—Discovers the New Hebrides and New Caledonia—Explores Terra del Fuego—Visits Sandwich's Land—His third voyage in 1776—He visits Prince Edward's Island, Van Diemen's Land, New Zealand, the Society Islands—Discovers the Sandwich Islands—Visits Nootka Sound—Passes Behring's Straits—Is stopped by the ice—Returns to Owyhee—Is murdered—Captain Clerke dies—Captain Gore visits Japan—Return of the Expedition in 1780.

THE known paths across the ocean, and the countries whose treasures had been already ascertained, were objects sufficient for the warlike fleets of Europe, which, indeed, could perform no service in regions where there were no conquests to reap, and no enemies to encounter. But while our men-of-war were protecting our commercial riches, or thundering against the foe along the beaten tracks of frequented waters, there were contemplative spirits at home, who, though engaged in neither trade nor war, nevertheless took a deep interest in the vast expanse of the sea, and the almost equally immeasurable hardihood of our sailors; scanning, with the subtle eye of scientific inquiry, those extensive regions which no discoverer had yet explored, no ship had yet visited; in their plausible speculations peopling the frozen waters in one direction with new continents, in another tracing around lands



already known, though but partially explored, a watery highway, the opening of which to the commerce of the world would be a source of incalculable benefit to those who should use it, of immortal glory to those who should discover it, or even contribute to its discovery.

As soon as the cessation of war left the mind of the nation in general at leisure for the consideration of such subjects, these men pressed the importance of their inquiries upon a willing government; and expeditions were speedily organized to traverse the ocean in every direction; some to explore the waters of the South, and ascertain whether there were, indeed, a great continent around that pole such as many mathematicians conceived to be indispensable to preserve the due proportions and just balance of the earth; others to face the better ascertained icebergs of the Arctic Circle, and try whether around the frozen, inhospitable shores of North America skilful patience might not discover some unbroken channel connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans at that extremity, and presenting a shorter and safer path to argosies and fleets which,

“ Laden with the wealth  
Of Ormuz or of Ind,”

might be bearing their treasures to European harbours.

The earliest of these expeditions was sent forth in the very first year after the signature of peace, in the summer of 1764. Its object was to explore the South Sea lying between the Capes of Good Hope and of Horn; and it was placed under the command of Commodore Byron, who has been already mentioned as an officer of the *Wager* in Anson's voyage twenty years before. He sailed across the Atlantic to the shores of Brazil, and began his explorations before he quitted the coast of America. Indeed, perhaps, the most interesting incident in his voyage was his visit to Patagonia, which enabled him to establish the fact which had been often asserted, but as often denied, that the natives of that part of the American continent did

really exceed the height of ordinary Europeans. A chief who came to meet him he conjectured to be nearly seven feet high ; and of an assembly of five hundred people, there was not one who was not some inches above six feet, and who was not also stout and muscular in proportion to his height. His testimony has generally been allowed to have set this question at rest ; but the opinion which he expressed in favour of the Straits of Magelhaens, a passage through which he preferred to a voyage round Cape Horn, has not met with equal favour in the eyes of subsequent navigators. He discovered several islands in the South Pacific Ocean, and his personal experience enabled him to account for errors into which previous explorers had fallen. It is well known that they (as others also have done since his time) had reported the existence of land where others who followed in their steps found only water. Byron had little difficulty in deciding that they had been deceived by huge banks of fog, which, in certain conditions of weather, are common in those latitudes, and which, at a slight distance, bear a great resemblance to land ; so great, indeed, that often it is only by sailing through them that their real character can be ascertained. He discovered several islands in the South Pacific, and, a year or two afterwards, he was followed by Captain Wallis and Cartaret, who discovered more ; and among them the great island of Otaheite. But all their enterprises are thrown into the shade by the three voyages of Captain James Cook ; and, as all these expeditions present the same general features, it will be sufficient if we here give a brief sketch of the labours of this last-mentioned officer, whose name, in spite of all that has been done since his time, still preserves its lustre, not only among his own countrymen, but among foreign nations also, as that of one of the ablest and most successful of modern navigators.

Cook's early life had been passed in occupations which gave but little prospect of his future eminence, or of the line

in which that eminence was destined to be attained. He was a haberdasher's apprentice at Staiths, a small town on the northern coast of Yorkshire ; but he soon conceived a dislike to his trade, and the daily sight of the boats of the fishermen, who formed the principal part of the population, kindled in him a desire to go to sea. He obtained a release from his articles, and entered the service of a Whitby Quaker, of the name of Walker, largely engaged in the coal and coasting trade. In the year 1755 he was seven-and-twenty years of age, and, as mate of one of his employer's ships, was lying in the Thames, when on a sudden a rigorous press was instituted to procure men for the fleet that was being equipped for the North American station. After much deliberation, he adopted the surest means of escaping impressment by voluntarily entering the Royal Navy. Fortunately his commanding officer, Captain (afterwards Sir Hugh) Pallisser, was possessed not only of discernment, but of interest at the Admiralty. He appreciated Cook's diligence, acuteness, and general good conduct, and showed him continued favour, till, in 1759, he procured him a warrant as Master of the *Mercury*, a vessel which formed one of the fleet with which Sir C. Saunders co-operated with Wolfe in the capture of Quebec. While in this service he again obtained for him the responsible employment of taking the soundings in the St. Lawrence, on the accuracy of which the safety of the whole fleet and army depended. The service was one of great danger, as well as one requiring great skill ; and Cook executed it in a manner that attracted the notice of the principal officers in the expedition. From the *Mercury* he was promoted into the *Northumberland*, Lord Colville's flagship ; and during that officer's operations for the recovery of Newfoundland in 1762 (which have been mentioned in the preceding chapter), he had a further opportunity of displaying his diligence and ability in a careful survey of the coast from Placentia to St. John's ; and in the next year or two,

he extended his investigations to the coast of the whole country, of the adjacent islands of Miquelon and St. Pierre, and also of those parts of the North American continent between the mouth of the St. Lawrence and Nova Scotia. His employment in this country furnished him also with an opportunity of displaying his practical acquaintance with astronomy, by sending home a carefully-drawn account of an observation of the solar eclipse which was visible at Newfoundland in August, 1766, with a deduction of the precise longitude of the island from that event. It is apparently to this last-mentioned work that his future career is more immediately owing. In the year 1769 a transit of Venus over the sun's disk was expected; and, as it was desired to take an accurate observation of it from some spot in the South Seas, the Royal Society pressed upon the Government the propriety of sending thither a person competent to perform that task with accuracy. The proposal was approved, a ship called the *Endeavour*, of 370 tons, was fitted out; Cook was appointed to command her, with the rank of Lieutenant, and in August, 1768, he set sail from Plymouth. The selection of a man who combined such proved nautical skill with astronomical knowledge, led the Government to enlarge their plan. His first object was still to be the observation of the planet and the sun; for which purpose he was directed to make his way at once to the newly-discovered island of Otaheite. But after the transit had taken place, he was instructed to proceed in an exploration of the whole of the South Pacific, and especially of the great island of New Zealand, which was not then known to be divided, and which, indeed, geographers generally believed to be only a portion of the great Southern continent. For the better execution of the scientific portion of his task, he was furnished with coadjutors of the first eminence: Mr. Green, astronomer; Mr. Joseph Banks, and Dr. Solander, who, as botanists and natura-



lists, had no superiors in Europe. He touched at Madeira and at Rio Janeiro ; in the middle of January he entered Strait Le Maire, and proceeded round Cape Horn, which, by the careful observations of the coast which he made, he now fully established as an easier route than that through the Strait of Magelhaens, and in the middle of April he reached Otaheite. As the transit was not expected to take place till the 3rd of June, he had abundant time for displaying one of his qualifications as an investigator of new countries, namely, his address and tact in dealing with the natives, of whose habits, and even of whose language, he was necessarily ignorant. They were inclined to be friendly and liberal ; but as the limited nature of their wants had given them very loose notions on the subject of property, the intimacies which they were inclined to form with our sailors were productive of almost as much embarrassment as could have been caused by a greater reserve. They were willing to sell anything that was wanted, and the prices they put upon their goods could not be objected to. They would sell their wives and daughters for a spike-nail a-piece, or a strip of green baize : but, on the other hand, they stole from us without scruple everything that came within their reach ; on one occasion even carrying off the quadrant, though that indispensable instrument was subsequently recovered.

His own men, too, gave him no little trouble, perplexing him equally by their unreasonable resentment, and at other times by their unreasoning friendship for the natives. One day when he was absent from the ship, his lieutenant placed a chief under arrest, another day a midshipman requited some fancied insult or threat by shooting a man : while, as a set-off to these acts of hostility, when the Endeavour was preparing to leave the island, some of the men deserted ; and it was found that they had selected wives, and proposed to remain as permanent settlers. Cook, who on more than one occasion,

and especially in the measures which he had taken to procure the restoration of the quadrant, had shown that he knew how to unite firmness with conciliation, seized some of the native chiefs, and intimated that he would not release them till his sailors were brought back to the ship. At last, however, all difficulties were happily arranged, and, when the English departed, cordiality between the two nations was so completely restored, that the chiefs wept at parting with Cook and Banks; and one native, named Tupia, who had formerly been the prime minister, and was still the high priest, and who added to these official claims to respect a reputation as the most skilful sailor in the country, and the man of the greatest information respecting the adjacent clusters of islands, proposed to join himself to Cook as a comrade. Cook at once perceived that he might be of the greatest use to him in his investigations, gladly accepted his offer, and in the course of his voyage had continual reason to congratulate himself on the acquisition of a most useful ally.

Indeed Tupia's local knowledge began to benefit our adventurers from the first moment of his embarkation, as he was able to point out to them islands in the immediate vicinity of Otaheite, which abounded in many articles of food which they had been unable to procure there. Huaheine, belonging to the same cluster, was rich in poultry and swine, and Cook, eager, for the sake of the health of his crew, to supply them with fresh meat, anchored there, and, by the aid of Tupia, who acted as interpreter, speedily established a very advantageous traffic. An axe would buy three large hogs; and, while we were pleased, the islanders were also so fully satisfied, that their king Oree, as an extraordinary compliment, proposed to the Captain to exchange names with him, and, giving him his own appellation, called himself Cookee, to his own great delight. Before he quitted Huaheine, Cook took possession of it and the rest of the cluster, to which he gave the appella-

tion of the Society Isles, in the name of King George, with all the accustomed formalities ; hoisting an Union Jack on the island, and leaving some British coins with the friendly monarch to be preserved in remembrance of his visit.

Touching at one or two more islands, but making no more long halts, he now proceeded on his way, till, at the beginning of October, he reached New Zealand : and, as a minute examination of that country had been one of the objects to which his attention was especially directed by his original instructions, he prepared at once to make a long stay there for that purpose. But he was met at the outset by a difficulty of the most formidable character in the unfriendly and untractable disposition of the inhabitants. The very day that he arrived on the coast, some of the crew who landed were attacked with such ferocity that they were compelled to shoot one of the natives in their own defence ; and though the companions of the slain man, who had probably never heard the sound of a gun before, were amazed both at the report and at its effects, they speedily recovered from their alarm, and renewed their hostile demonstrations, which were the more formidable that most of their weapons, as was soon discovered, were poisoned. Cook now tried the services of Tupia as interpreter, and began to conceive hopes of coming to a better understanding with them when he found that they understood his language. But he was entirely disappointed ; and at last was compelled, most unwillingly, to renounce all hopes of establishing friendly relations or beneficial intercourse with so fierce and untameable a nation. Nevertheless he continued his investigations of the country. He was much struck with the general fertility of the soil, with the splendid timber produced in many districts, and with the salubrity of the climate. He did not in this voyage fully explore the southern portion of the country ; and, though he ascertained the fact of the separation of the nor-

thern island from the southern, sailing through the strait which divided them, and which has ever since borne his name : he was forced to leave it still doubtful whether the southern island formed a portion of the great southern continent, though he began to suspect that that continent had no existence save in unfounded speculations and visionary dreams. He spent the whole winter in his explorations of the country ; and, having taken formal possession of it in the King's name, he, in the spring of 1770, weighed anchor, and sailed westward, to carry out further the instructions of his Government.

He left Cape Farewell, the northern point of the southern island, on the 31st of March ; in less than three weeks he came in sight of New Holland or, to give it its more modern name, New South Wales ; and in exactly four weeks he cast anchor in the capacious roadstead to which he subsequently gave the name of Botany Bay. Here again he found the natives untractable, though at first he was inclined to attribute this disposition not so much to ferocity as to indifference ; they were not richer than the inhabitants of other uncivilised islands at which he had touched ; but they had no desire for the wares which had served in other islands as a medium of traffic. They had no regard for beads, glass, coloured cloth ; nor even for articles of iron, which had most struck other savages with an idea of their value ; they coveted neither nails, knives, nor hatchets ; and after a time their original indifference grew into a deadly animosity, which sought to gratify itself by more formidable means than the clubs and darts of other savages, or even than the poisoned arrows of the New Zealanders. Mr. Banks had pitched a tent on the land, and, with Cook himself and several of the men, was making preparations to prosecute his investigations into the botany and natural history of the country, when one of the men, on looking out, perceived the whole land behind them burning. The natives had

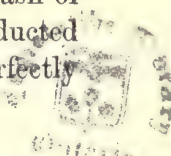


set the grass to windward of the tent on fire ; and it was only by the greatest promptitude, and at the sacrifice of many of their tools and instruments, that the English were enabled to save their lives. And not only were they endangered by the ferocity of the people, but the country itself was full of perils, which, though such as seamen are prepared to encounter, were not the less formidable on that account. The coast was fringed with shoals and coral reefs in every direction, nor could any vigilance entirely protect the ships from damage. On one occasion their escape from destruction seemed almost miraculous. On the night of the 10th June, 1770, the Endeavour struck heavily on a coral reef in Trinity Bay, and started a leak which not all the pumps in the ship could subdue. It is recorded that the whole crew were so impressed with the imminence of their peril, that they even ceased to swear ; and, had it not been for the presence of mind of a midshipman of the name of Monkhouse, their worst apprehensions would probably have been realized. He suggested to Cook an expedient which he had once seen employed on a merchant-vessel ; and easily obtained permission now to try it on the Endeavour. He took a studding-sail, stitched down upon it a quantity of oakum and wool, and spread upon that all the sheep-dung and dirt of all kinds that he could find in the vessel, and then hauled the sail thus prepared under the bottom of the ship. When it came under the leak, the suction that carried in the water carried in also a portion of the sail, with the wool and dirt ; and thus so far diminished the leakage, that the crew, encouraged to redoubled exertion by the favourable change thus presented to them, were now able to keep the water sufficiently under to get the ship to land. When they had got safe to shore and began to repair her, then for the first time they found out the extent of the damage which she had sustained ; and which, had they known it while on

board, would have probably driven them to despair, and discouraged them from ever trying to save her. They also discovered the marvellous way in which Providence had come to their assistance without their suspecting it. The reef on which the ship struck had made a clean hole, of several feet in circumference ; but at the same time the violence of the blow had broken off a large piece of the rock, which had stuck fast in the broken timbers, and had thus filled up the greater portion of the leak.

The difficulties of the coast navigation were also greatly increased by the irregularity of the tides, which presented so strange a character that, after some week's experience, Cook was unable to tell from what quarter the flood-tide came ; and which had so much more power close in land than in the offing, that it more than once nearly ran him ashore even in calm weather. He also found that there was a great difference between the height of the spring-tide by day and by night ; and from these and other similar causes he looked upon the tides and currents on the eastern side of New South Wales as investing the navigation of that coast with very peculiar hazard.

In the autumn Cook moved northward and arrived at New Guinea, which he ascertained to be unquestionably a separate island from New South Wales ; the natives, however, showed so hostile a disposition that he made no long stay there. Continuing his northward course, he proceeded to Java, where he put the Endeavour through a thorough course of repair to qualify her for the voyage to England ; and, while lying in Batavia Roads, he had an opportunity of testing the use of the chain lightning-conductors with which the ship was furnished : a violent thunderstorm came on, which shivered the masts of a Dutch East Indiaman alongside the Endeavour and reduced her to a complete wreck ; while a second flash of lightning, which struck the British vessel, was conducted by the chain over her side, and was thus rendered perfectly



harmless. His stay at Batavia was protracted by the extent of the repairs which were found necessary ; and no greater proof of the arduous character of the expedition can be given than is implied by the state in which the shipwrights found the Endeavour when they came to examine her : not only was her keel greatly injured, and a large quantity of the sheathing torn off, but, even in those portions which were apparently sound, the planks were so worn by the ravages of the worm and the action of the waves, that for a considerable space they were reduced to a thickness which did not exceed an eighth of an inch ; for some weeks the thickness of a lath had been all that was interposed between the crew and instant death. Two months were spent in the repairs which such a state of things rendered indispensable ; but, however necessary this delay was to the ship, it proved most prejudicial to the crew, among whom the climate produced an almost universal sickness. Cook himself became seriously ill, Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander were for some days in imminent danger, and it was somewhat remarkable that the savages suffered more from disease than the Europeans. The Society Islands belong to a latitude not many degrees different from that of Java : yet Tupia died, as did the one or two natives whom Cook had taken on board from other islands ; while of the English scarcely any actually died, though many were so completely prostrated that it was long before they recovered their strength even under the reviving influence of a voyage in the open sea.

At last, on the 25th of December, 1770, the Endeavour, now thoroughly repaired, set sail for England : her adventures were over ; and on the 12th of June in the following year she reached home. Cook was raised to the rank of Commander, and received the highest praises for every part of his conduct, both from his immediate superiors at the Admiralty, and from the scientific bodies which had taken the greatest interest in his voyage, as,

indeed, they had been the principal cause of its being undertaken.

His success on this expedition stimulated the despatch of another the next year, to clear up points which he had still left undetermined. His researches had led him to distrust the existence of a great southern continent, and he had proved beyond all question that neither New South Wales nor New Zealand formed any part of it. But he declined to assert positively that it existed in no other direction ; and to clear up this point he was again sent out in the summer of 1772. On this occasion two ships, the *Resolution*, of four hundred and sixty-two tons, and the *Adventure*, of three hundred and thirty-six, were placed under his command ; and his instructions directed him to examine the whole of the South Pacific, and to advance as far as possible into the highest Antarctic latitudes, in order to set the question of the existence of the supposed southern continent at rest.

The companionship and aid of one or two men eminent for their attainments in different branches of science, in astronomy, botany, and natural history, was secured for him in this expedition also ; and on the 13th of July he quitted England, and after a fair and what in those days was considered a quick voyage, he arrived at the Cape of Good Hope on the 30th of October. Having replenished his stock of provisions, on the 22nd of November he proceeded on his way, intending to steer almost due south ; but he was presently driven, by a heavy storm from the north-west, some degrees to the eastward of the precise course which he had marked out for himself. This deviation, however, was of no material moment : it was of greater consequence, that, by the 10th of December, when only in latitude  $50^{\circ} 40'$ , he began to meet with fields of ice ; some of which formed islands two miles in circumference, and sixty feet in height, and, by continually threatening the vessels with instant destruction



already began to add greatly to the labours of the crews. It was midsummer in those regions, yet the cold was piercing, while, to add to Cook's anxieties, the scurvy began to appear among his men; though that presently yielded to a change of diet, since, in anticipation of attacks of this disease, he had provided the ships plentifully with antiscorbutic food before his departure from England. By the 1st of January he had penetrated to the latitude and longitude in which the French navigator, Bouvet, stated himself to have discovered land, to which he had given the name of Cape Circumcision; and, as nothing was to be seen in any direction but sea, he had no difficulty in pronouncing the Frenchman to have been misled by the fields of ice, which day by day became more thick and more threatening; though the fact that the ice when melted supplies the ships with abundance of fresh water (the salt having been apparently evaporated by the freezing process), was some compensation for the alarm which they caused. At last, when he had reached the latitude of  $67^{\circ} 15'$ , he found that he could advance no further: one unbroken expanse of ice blocked up the whole sea from the east to west-south-west; and apprehending that, as the weather became colder, it might form also to the northward, and so entirely block him in, he bore up again towards the north to search for some other islands of which different French navigators had recently announced the discovery. These also he failed to find; and, as he himself was more than once deceived by fresh fields of ice, which in thick weather bore so strong a resemblance to land that he did not discover their real character till he was close upon them, he ascribed the statements of the foreigners to a similar delusion.

The weather now became so thick that he lost the company of the *Adventure*: an annoyance which was probably partly attributable to a strange variation which in these latitudes was found to affect the compasses, and

which was also discovered to influence them in a different manner, according to the side of the ships on which the sun was. The separation from his consort did not, however, give him any real concern, as he had arranged his course with her Commander, Captain Furneaux, so fully that he made no doubt of being soon rejoined by her. Meantime he bore on steadily in an easterly direction, and passing to the south of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, on the 25th of March he reached the southern coast of New Zealand, arriving at a part of it that had never yet been visited by any European traveller. The natives of this district he found far more friendly than their more northern countrymen; and he distributed among them some of the live animals and seeds which he had brought with him, in the hope of thus naturalising the produce of England in her most distant possessions. Sometimes he preserved the recollection of his beneficence by giving names to different spots commemorative of his gifts; for instance, styling a place Goose Cove, because he left four geese there. While at the southern extremity of the country, his head-quarters had been in Dusky Bay; in the middle of May he moved upwards to Queen Charlotte's Sound, where he expected to rejoin the Adventure, and where, to his great joy he found his calculations realised. Captain Furneaux, on his passage to that point, had explored the coast of Van Diemen's Land, being the first European who had visited it since its original discovery by Tasman in 1642. He had not, however, carried his researches so far as to ascertain its separation from New South Wales, of which he still believed it to form a portion.

It being now the season of the English summer, it was nearly midwinter in the antarctic regions; and, as such a time was of course unfavourable for prosecuting discoveries in the extreme south, Cook resolved on crossing towards his old quarters in the Society Islands, to examine that

part of the Pacific more thoroughly than he had done in his preceding voyage. The natives were delighted at seeing him again ; but did not, on that account, abandon their habits of pilfering ; and, as before, stole everything on which they could lay their hands : while, at some of the islands, they did not forbear even from violence when fair means would not procure them the articles which they desired. The chiefs, however, everywhere manifested the same confidence in Cook which they had displayed before, and often assisted him in the recovery of what had been lost. In his recent visit to New Zealand, he had ascertained beyond a doubt the fact, which he had previously believed, that the New Zealanders were cannibals. He now conceived that he was justified in asserting that the inhabitants of the Society Islands were not such, though it was equally certain that they at stated times offered human victims to their gods. In October he returned to New Zealand, intending in its harbours to repair and provision the ships, and to make that the starting-place from which to work to the southward, in another search for the imagined Great Continent. On his way he again parted from the *Adventure*, and was never again rejoined by her ; but the circumstance of his being thus left to prosecute his discoveries alone in no degree diminished the resolution with which he prepared to plunge into unknown seas, in regions of which all that he knew only proved them to be full of dangers such as it might not depend upon seamanship or human courage to surmount.

On the 26th of November he weighed anchor in Queen Charlotte Sound, and proceeded on the great object of his voyage, steering as nearly as possible south-south-east. This year he reached the latitude  $62^{\circ} 10'$ , before he met with any ice ; but when he arrived at  $67^{\circ} 31'$ , only  $16'$  further to the south than he had penetrated in the preceding winter, he again found himself stopped by the same

unbroken fields of ice. He worked up to the north-east till he got nearly to  $50^{\circ}$ ; and then, again turning the Resolution's head to the south, he made his way to  $71^{\circ} 10'$  S. lat., W. long.  $106^{\circ} 54'$ : a region in which at that time no other European vessel had ever been beheld. At this point the frozen barrier became absolutely impenetrable; he could go no further, and he conceived that no object was to be gained by attempting to force a path which Nature herself seemed to have closed up. He had ascertained, to his own perfect conviction, that to the south of him there was either no land whatever, or, at all events, none inhabited by or accessible to human beings; and he therefore again bent his steps towards the north, hoping by revisiting Otaheite, perchance to rejoin the Endeavour, and designing if possible to visit the little island known as Davis's or Easter Island, the precise situation of which had never been laid down. So fairly accurate, however, had been the description of its position, that he found it without difficulty, and ascertained its true place to be  $27^{\circ} 5'$  S. lat.,  $109^{\circ} 46'$  W. long.; and he spared a few days to examine the colossal statues which the Dutch navigator Roggewin had mentioned, but which no one had hitherto subjected to any close inspection. Yet they well deserved a careful scrutiny, as evidences of a degree of art and also of the possession of mechanical power which had been seen in no other island of the Pacific, and which indeed seemed incompatible with the utter barbarism of the inhabitants. In some apparently remote age, huge platforms, some of which were forty feet long, sixteen wide, and nearly twenty feet high, had been constructed of stones of larger size, not cemented, but morticed together with admirable workmanship; and on these platforms were immense statues, usually in a sitting posture, of different sizes, from fifteen to nearly thirty feet in height, and of a more than proportionate breadth of shoulder and bulk of



limb. The bodies were of the rudest form, little more shapely than the Hermæ of Ancient Greece ; but the sculpture of the faces, especially in the delicacy of the nose and chin, was not unworthy of a more civilised people. A huge cylindrical stone, four or five feet high, and still larger in diameter, was placed, carefully poised, on the head of each statue ; and Roggewin, taking this for a kind of coronal ; had looked upon them as idols ; but Cook, to whom an examination of the platforms on which they stood disclosed some human skeletons, was led to believe that the platforms were the burial places of different leading families, and that the statues were perhaps the effigies of the original founders of the respective houses.

After touching at the Marquesas and discovering some other unimportant islands on his way, he again arrived at Otaheite ; and finding it necessary to stay there some time to repair the Resolution, which was not only very foul after her long voyage, but was also much strained in many parts, he devoted himself, while the repairs were going on, to a more minute examination of the island than he had previously had leisure for. The chiefs again manifested their joy at his return, and even honoured him with some festive exhibitions such as he little expected. On one occasion they acted a play founded on incidents of their own domestic life. On another they collected the whole of their fleets and passed them before the British officers in a grand naval review. One hundred and sixty large double canoes showed their resources for war, and these were accompanied by a still larger number of boats used apparently as transports and victuallers. In the centre of each vessel of the latter class was a small house, and they had also masts and sails, though the war canoes trusted to their oars alone. Cook reckoned the entire crews at little less than eight thousand men ; and he was led from this and other circumstances to conceive a greater idea of the magnitude of the island than he had previously enter-

tained, and to estimate its entire population at not fewer than two hundred thousand souls.

It was May, 1774, before the Resolution once more quitted Otaheite, steering a course almost due west, which presently brought him to the Friendly Islands, and from thence to a group to which he gave the name of the New Hebrides, in one of which, called Tanna, was a volcano of some size with a number of hot-springs at the bottom of it. The natives, however, though not unfriendly, were so jealous of his exploring their country that he was unable to discover anything more about them than that they were of a sulphureous nature ; perhaps, too, he did not judge it prudent to offend a people so skilful in the use of arms, and especially of the spear, that one of his scientific companions compared them to the heroes of Homer, and declared his belief in the prowess of Hector and Achilles to be now for the first time established by the menacing pomp with which the Tanna warriors brandished aloft their wooden spears, and by the force and accuracy of aim with which they pierced any object against which they directed them. From Tanna, bearing now to the south-west, he came to a large island, to which he gave the name of New Caledonia, remarkable chiefly for groves of pines. From thence working his way down to New Zealand, he discovered on his way a small island, to which he gave the name of Norfolk : it is of no great size, but, like New Caledonia, well-timbered with a peculiar species of pine ; and the mild and even temperature of the climate is sufficiently shown by the history of that tree, which, though now a common ornament in our greenhouses, is too tender to bear the moderate severity of an English winter.

He proceeded onwards to New Zealand, and, on landing in Queen Charlotte's Sound, he found that the Adventure had been there since her separation from him, though he could not learn what had become of her since. He had now been absent from England two years and a half ; yet,

wishing to make one more search for the great Southern Continent before his return, he resolved to go straight to Cape Horn, and after examining that region, to explore the southern sea between that promontory and the Cape of Good Hope. In the middle of December he reached Terra del Fuego, but found nothing to repay his industry ; rocky barren precipices made up the whole district, there was scarcely a sign of vegetation, though that and the adjacent islands abounded in wildfowl. The inhabitants were of stunted size, and more savage in their appearance and manners than any human beings with whom Cook had yet come in contact ; and at the beginning of 1775 he gladly quitted their inhospitable coast, to conclude his investigations of the southern seas. Proceeding in a southeasterly direction, he came to a small island, which, in honour of his sovereign, he christened Georgia ; then steering almost due south, he came to a cluster of islands, to which, believing them to be the most southern land that had ever been discovered, he gave the name of the Southern Thule ; though on modern maps they are distinguished as Sandwich's Land, from the name which, in honour of the nobleman who at that time presided over the Admiralty, he gave to the most southern of the whole group. And then, after searching in vain for some islands of which former navigators from France and Holland had reported the existence, but of which he was unable to discover even a trace, he resolved to return home. Towards the latter end of March, he reached the Cape of Good Hope ; and, after touching at St. Helena, Ascension, and the Azores, on the 30th of July, 1775, he anchored at Spithead, after a voyage of three years and three weeks, in which he had only lost one man by sickness.

It was a favourable sign of the humanity and enlarged wisdom of the age that no part of Cook's conduct attracted more notice, or won him more marked commendation, than the anxiety which he had displayed in



securing the health of his crews, and the success with which his efforts had been attended. His measures for supplying them with wholesome and medicinal food, for ventilating and fumigating the ships, were carefully scrutinized and extolled; and his plain and unpretending account of those measures was rewarded with the gold medal of the Royal Society, while at the same time he received the highest professional rewards that could be conferred on him, being promoted to the rank of post-captain, and being made a captain of Greenwich Hospital. His disposition, however, was not one to sit down in indolent enjoyment of his well-earned rewards. The question of the existence or non-existence of a north-west passage had lately been agitated with great eagerness. We have mentioned the expedition of Captain Middleton in 1741, and the opinion which that officer had been led to form on the subject. Other expeditions had since been sent in the same direction; and, though they had all equally failed, yet one of them, set on foot by a private company in the hope of obtaining the parliamentary reward, and conducted by Captain Moor and Captain Smith, was supposed by some of those concerned in it to have furnished additional arguments in favour of the existence of the passage, and of the practicability of laying down a route by which it could be traversed with safety and certainty.

To set the question definitively at rest, at the beginning of 1776, it was determined to send out a fresh expedition to explore the northern seas, for the command of which Cook offered himself. His offer was eagerly accepted; and in July he once more sailed from England, in his old ship the *Resolution*, on what was fated to be his last enterprise. He had also under his command the *Discovery*, Captain Clerke, a vessel of almost the same size as the *Endeavour*; and, as in his former voyages, he had the aid of several men eminent for their scientific acquirements, who gladly embraced this opportunity of extending their in-



vestigations under a captain whose achievements in that line had now procured him a world-wide reputation. The course prescribed to Cook on this occasion differed from that which had been taken by former explorers. They had generally gone at once to the north, and had sought to make their way along the coast of Greenland, through Davis's Straits and Baffin's Bay, from the Atlantic to the Pacific; but the failure of all their attempts had now suggested the advisability of making an experiment at the other end of the supposed channel; and Cook was instructed to sail up the Pacific, and, coasting along the western shores of North America, and passing through Behring's Straits, then to keep an easterly course, in the hope of thus effecting his return to Europe. He himself was disposed to think favourably of this plan, which had this recommendation at least in his eyes, that, by keeping him in a less beaten track, it increased his chance of making other discoveries. He took his way to the Pacific by the Cape of Good Hope in preference to Cape Horn; and steering south-east from thence, he arrived at some islands which had been discovered by the French four years earlier; and which, as no names had been given to them, he now called Prince Edward's Islands, in honour of the young Prince, afterwards known as the Duke of Kent, and the father of the gracious, honoured, and beloved lady, who now sits on the throne of these kingdoms. After touching at one or two more places on his way, in January, 1777, he arrived at Van Diemen's Land, making some acquaintance with the natives, whom he looked upon as, with the exception of those of Terra del Fuego, the most incapable of civilisation of all the savages whom he had seen. He still believed it to be a part of New South Wales: and this opinion prevailed till the end of the century, when, as will be hereafter related, Captain Flinders, by sailing through Bass's Straits, established its character as a separate island.

From Van Diemen's Land, Cook proceeded to his old quarters in Queen Charlotte's Sound : and, after paying his friends in New Zealand a short visit, he passed on to the Friendly Islands, and from thence to the Society Islands, arriving at Otaheite on the 12th of August. There was but little novelty in the adventures which befel him in this part of his voyage. The chiefs were as friendly as ever, and the natives in general as great thieves as ever, so much so, that the Captain was forced to use sterner means to repress their dishonesty than he had ever employed before. On his last visit, he had been provoked into giving one robber a regular nautical flogging : and now, while he was at Huaheine, one man was so pertinacious in his thefts, and so acute in selecting the most valuable articles, that Cook resolved to make a permanent example of him to deter his countrymen from similar acts for the future, and cut off his ears. His companions were far from resenting this treatment of him : indeed each successive visit that Cook made them appeared to increase their respect for him, and for the power of the country to which he belonged. In his second voyage he had taken with him from one of the islands, a native named Omai, who had been kindly treated in England, having been even presented to the King ; and who now related to his countrymen the wonders he had beheld there with all a traveller's exaggeration, while his eloquence was powerfully enforced by a display which Cook himself unconsciously made of his European accomplishments. He had a couple of horses on board the *Resolution*, and, wishing to see more of the interior of Otaheite, he and Captain Clerke mounted them and rode about the island. If among the ancients, the first sight of a mounted Thessalian gave rise to the fable of the Centaurs, it may yet be safely affirmed that the astonishment of the Greeks of old nowise exceeded that felt on this occasion by the savages of the Pacific, who were ready to believe anything

that could be told them of men whom they themselves saw to be possessed of such inconceivable power and address. Nothing that they had heard, nothing that they had seen, gave them an equal idea of the greatness of European nations.

He did not leave these islands till the commencement of the new year ; when he steered to the northward, and by the middle of January came to a fresh cluster of islands, the largest of which was known by the natives as Owhyhee ; though that island, the most eastern of the whole, he did not discover on this his first visit. The original names of individual islands he did not alter ; but to the entire group he gave the name of the First Lord of the Admiralty, and styled them the Sandwich Islands. In many points the natives resembled those of the Society Isles ; especially in their language and in their practice of human sacrifice. In some respects, such as intelligence and steadiness of character, Cook thought them superior to any other barbarians whom he had visited. He did not, however, make any long stay there, but, being impatient to carry out the main design of his expedition, after a fortnight's stay, he set sail for the American coast ; and at the end of the first week in March, he reached it, near the centre of the territory now known as Oregon, but at that time honoured with the title of New Albion. Without stopping to anchor, he coasted along, passing outside Vancouver's Island, whose separation from the continent he did not discover till he came to an inlet, to which he gave the name of King George till he found that the inhabitants themselves called it Nootka : and as Nootka Sound it is known to the present day. The natives differed but little in disposition from those whom he had met with in the Friendly and other islands : they were friendly, fearless, and incurable thieves ; they were also well inclined to trade with the sailors, and offered them many articles which, it was easy to perceive, would

have a value in Europe ; especially skins of the animals of the country, the bear, the martin, and the sea-otter. And though they were themselves possessed of iron tools, still among the objects for which they desired to sell their commodities, articles of metal held the first place : nails, knives, chisels, and hatchets, were here as precious as ever. But finally they took a fancy to rating brass, or things which looked like brass, at a higher value than goods of iron or tin ; and to gratify this inclination, if they had nothing to sell, they would steal the buttons off the officers' coats while they were talking to them.

Cook proceeded further towards the north, landing occasionally at spots which appeared favorable ; and giving English names to the capes and bays that met his eye. One he called Prince William's Sound, from the third of the young Princes, the late William IV. One has since been known by his own name, and is still marked on our maps as Cook's River. As he advanced, the stunted stature of the natives began to bear witness to the fearful severity of their climate. At Prince William's Sound and beyond it, their dwarfish appearance reminded one or two of the crew of the Esquimaux, though they were more civilised than the natives of Nootka, from the circumstance that they had been previously visited by European travellers ; as was proved by their bringing to the ships some papers in the Russian language, bearing the date of this same year 1778. The Captain conjectured that these must have been left there by traders who had crossed over from the Russian settlements in Asia ; and he subsequently found many reasons to think that the intercourse between these parts of the Old and New World was far from infrequent. In fact he ascertained that a promontory off which he anchored soon afterwards, and to which he gave the name of Cape Prince of Wales, was only thirteen leagues distant from Eastern Cape in Siberia. And he had the honour of being the first who thus



measured the width of Behring's Strait. On the 17th of July he reached the latitude  $70^{\circ} 41'$ ; and at this point he first met with ice, which the next day, when he had advanced but three or four miles more to the north, began to assume the appearance of a solid field, effectually barring his further progress. In vain he endeavoured to find an opening in any direction to the north or east of the ship. The ice increased every day, and it soon became apparent that nothing more could be done that season. The sailors themselves were in some degree consoled by the circumstance of the ice bringing down herds of sea-horses, which they found it easy to kill, and which, to men who had long been living on salt meat, appeared delicious food. But it was not without severe disappointment that Cook found himself compelled to postpone till the next year the further prosecution of his main object. All that remained for him was, by a careful examination of the sea in which he was, to anticipate some portion of his labour of the ensuing spring: a spring which he was fated, alas! never to behold. About Behring's Strait, therefore, he continued his investigations till the descending ice drove him to the southward. At the beginning of October he had worked his way back as far as Oonalashka, where he found a settlement of Russian hunters and furriers, who were willing to give him all the information in their power, and who showed him some charts, which, however, only proved that in spite of the proximity of that part of America to their Asiatic possessions, their knowledge of it was confined to the coast of Behring's Strait.

Cook had determined to winter at the Sandwich Islands, as affording the harbour nearest to the scene of the labours which he intended to resume at the first moment that the relaxation of the winter's frost would permit; and at the end of October he finally quitted the Northern waters, and set sail to revisit these his latest discovery. His return to them extended that discovery, for, as he happened

now to come upon them at their south-eastern extremity, he became aware of the existence of other islands belonging to the group, which he had not previously seen : among which was the largest of all, Owhyhee. It was the 30th of November when he first cast anchor under its shores, little suspecting that he was never to quit them. As he soon perceived it to be far superior in extent to any of its fellows, he spent several weeks in sailing round it and examining the bays and harbours which it afforded ; and of which, from the position occupied by the island in the centre of the Pacific, he thought an accurate knowledge likely to prove highly useful to future navigators. As might have been expected, there was but little difference between the character of the islanders and that of the other savages with whom he had become acquainted. The chiefs were perhaps even more friendly ; the people a little more thievish ; both chiefs and people were fickle and capricious, and, when provoked, spiteful and treacherous. For some weeks the greatest cordiality prevailed between them and their visitors. Terreeoboo, the king of the island, went on board the *Resolution*, exchanged names with Cook, gave him a splendid cloak made of feathers, and accepted his shirt in exchange. He even begged the Captain to make him a present of one of his officers ; and was with some difficulty put off with a promise that, when the *Resolution* should return in the following winter, an effort should be made to arrange that affair to his satisfaction.

It was an apparently trifling matter which terminated this friendship. With a view to some necessary repairs, the two ships were anchored as close as possible to the land, and while in this position were visited by great numbers of the natives. The sight of the strange tools and instruments which lay around excited their thievish propensities. Cook himself ordered punishment to be inflicted on some of the thieves, and more than one fierce conflict took place between the islanders and the sailors.

At last some of the natives ventured to steal the *Discovery's* cutter in the night. Captain Clerke reported the incident to Cook, who at once sent in the launches belonging to both the ships to recover her, and later in the day landed himself with the intention of seizing a chief if possible, as a hostage for the return of the cutter, or else of securing some of the largest of the canoes. Kariopoo, the chief whom he had designed to seize, appeared not unwilling to return on board with him; but his people rose in great disorder when they understood what was proposed. Some were seen to sharpen daggers, and presently a vast crowd collected around with the most menacing gestures and with every variety of arms. Cook gave up all idea of conducting the chief on board, and began to direct his whole attention to effecting his own escape; stones were thrown and spears hurled at him, and more than once he was compelled to fire on the crowd which pressed upon him, and now amounted to several thousand men. His officers in the boats, who saw his danger, were standing close in shore in order to receive him, and some marines on board one of the boats were attempting to cover his retreat by a fire of musketry, when unhappily a signal which he made was misunderstood. As he approached the shore he beckoned to the boats, and shouted an order to cease firing. One of the pinnaces at once came up to the beach, but the officer who commanded the launch, which was nearest to Cook (fancying, as he subsequently alleged, that the wave of the Captain's hand was meant as a signal to draw off) retreated; and Cook's only chance of safety was to run along the shore to the pinnace. As he hastened onwards, a savage coming behind him dealt him a heavy blow on the back of his head with a club; as he was rising, a second savage sprung upon him and stabbed him. He fell into shallow water, a crowd of savages pressed upon him to keep him under and drown him; still he struggled manfully, and being a man of great personal strength, had



almost regained his feet, when he received a second blow on the head, fell into the water, and was seen alive no more. Presently the natives dragged up his dead body on the rocks, and were for hours seen wreaking their hatred on the lifeless corpse, stabbing, and mutilating it, and then, as was their practice with respect to enemies whom they had slain in war, carving it for their unnatural feast, so that when they had departed his comrades were unable to collect more than his bones for burial.

Thus miserably died a man whom all countries agree in ranking among the greatest of naval discoverers. He was succeeded in command of the expedition by Captain Clerke, who, having completed the examination of the Sandwich Islands, at the return of spring proceeded to Kamschatka, and, after establishing friendly relations with the Russians in that district, continued his course towards the North : but was again stopped by the ice in the same latitude, and almost on the same day on which Cook had been arrested in his progress in the preceding year. He, too, was compelled to decide on returning to the South, but he had hardly formed this determination when he died of consumption, and was succeeded by Captain Gore, whom, when he himself had removed into the *Resolution*, he had placed in command of the *Discovery*. Gore steered towards Japan, visited that island, of which till lately so little has been known to Europeans, examined a great portion of its coast, and then set sail for England. Without meeting any further adventures deserving any particular record, he doubled the Cape of Good Hope ; and in October, 1780, arrived at the Nore, after a voyage of upwards of four years, which, though its main object, the discovery of a northern passage between Europe and Asia, had not been achieved, had nevertheless greatly extended our knowledge of the regions which our ships had traversed, and had cleared away many difficulties from the path of future labourers in the same field.



## CHAPTER XIV.

1776 — 1780.

Occasional encroachments of the French and Spaniards — War with our American colonies — At first little employment in it for the navy — Failure of the attempt on Charleston — Successful equipment of a fleet on Lake Champlain — Lord Howe fails in bringing D'Estaing to action — Our squadrons take Miquelon and St. Pierre — Admiral Barrington takes Sainte Lucie — The French take Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada — Action between Admiral Byron and D'Estaing — Commodore Sir G. Collier destroys a fleet of American frigates, &c. — Keppel in command of the Channel fleet — Takes the *Licorne* — Returns home for reinforcements — Comes up with D'Orvilliers off Ushant — Indecisive action — Trial of Keppel and of Palliser — Keppel's subsequent career — Spain joins in the war against us — Admiral Parker captures a squadron — The siege of Gibraltar is commenced — The combined fleets of France and Spain enter the Channel — They retreat before Sir C. Hardy — Rodney is sent to relieve Gibraltar — Captures a large fleet of Spanish merchantmen — Totally defeats the Spanish fleet — His humanity and courtesy.

WITH the exception of those peaceful enterprises which we have recorded in the last chapter, our history has now little to occupy it for many years. Our enemies showed their soreness at the result of the late war by attempts at encroachment, on the part of the French in the West Indies, and, on the part of the Spaniards at the Falkland Islands ; but their unfriendly demonstrations were met by a promptitude and vigour which compelled them speedily to withdraw their pretensions ; and, till the breaking out of the American war, it cannot be said that there was any interruption to the peace which prevailed throughout the world. Nor, when that unhappy event took place, did the conflict with the colonies give any great occupation to our fleets, till our former enemies in Europe took part in the struggle. For, the colonists, as a nation, had no ships of war ; and though individuals fitted out privateers which

harassed those of our traders which were bound to the Canadian ports and the islands of the West Indies nearest to the Continent, their enterprises only gave rise to comparatively unimportant actions between single vessels ; and the only operations in which our fleets or squadrons were able to take a share were necessarily combined with and subordinate to those of the army. In these we were not always successful. One of our greatest efforts was directed to the reduction of Charleston, against which, in July, 1776, Commodore Sir Peter Parker was sent with two fifty-gun ships, four frigates, and several smaller vessels, to co-operate with a land force under the command of General Clinton ; but, in proceeding to the attack of the principal fort, the greater part of our ships grounded on a shoal, and became exposed to a heavy fire which they had no means of returning with effect. One frigate Parker was compelled to burn to save it from falling into the hands of the enemy ; two more were so much crippled as to be rendered useless. The loss of men on board the whole squadron was very great, and at last, when the contest had lasted upwards of nine hours without the slightest indication that any impression had been made on the enemy, the Commodore drew off and returned to New York.

A more successful achievement was that of Captain Douglas in the *Isis*, who, when a strong army of the colonists had laid siege to Quebec, with a small squadron of two frigates and a sloop made his way up the St. Lawrence as far as that city, landed reinforcements and supplies for the garrison : and, when on finding himself thus strengthened, the Governor-General Carleton had made a vigorous sally and routed the besiegers, moved higher up the river, and thus prevented the junction of the retreating force with the division on the southern bank. Nor were his exertions confined to the ships which he had already with him. The Americans had by

this time a squadron of small vessels on Lake Champlain, which gave them a great superiority in the surrounding district; and Douglas now turned his attention to raising a force fit to encounter it. Some frames of small vessels had already been sent from England to Quebec, to be put together on their arrival. These he transported to Lake Champlain, put them together, built more; and in six weeks he was able to launch one ship of eighteen guns, two of fourteen, one of twelve, and not fewer than twenty-four gun-boats. The American squadron exceeded them in numbers, and in the average size of the vessels, though it had none equal to our largest; and it was under the command of General Arnold, who, as a soldier, had displayed a skill superior to that of most of his comrades in the colonial service, but who fortunately had less experience of naval affairs. In a fierce action, which took place on the 12th of October, 1776, he was totally defeated. His largest vessels were either captured or burnt; he himself with difficulty reached the shore and escaped; and our supremacy on this important lake continued undisturbed till the end of the war.

Even before these events had taken place, and partly in order to negotiate with greater effect, we had considerably strengthened our naval force on the coast. Admiral Keppel, with a strange disregard of his duty to his profession and his country, refused the command, because he disapproved of the original policy of the ministers towards the colonists; and it was conferred on Lord Howe, who was also charged with the office of communicating to the leaders of the insurrection the concessions which the Ministers were now willing to make, and which, it was hoped, might even yet recall the colonists to their loyalty. He came too late. He reached Staten Island, near New York, on the 4th of July, and on that very day the American Congress had put an end to all hopes of reconciliation, by publishing their Declaration of Independence.

That year he had no opportunity of gaining any warlike advantage ; but in the summer of the following year he co-operated with his brother, Sir William Howe, in his campaign on the Delaware, moving some of his smaller ships to a considerable distance up that river, and greatly contributing to the capture of Philadelphia.

The next year, the war, as it concerned the fleet, assumed a different and totally new aspect. France acknowledged the independence of the colonies under the title which they had assumed of the United States, and signed a formal treaty with them in that character. We showed our resentment at that acknowledgment and that treaty by an instant declaration of war, and began at once to increase the strength of our armaments, as this addition to the number of our enemies required. It was known that the French had been for some time equipping a powerful fleet in the harbour of Toulon, and, as it was conjectured that its destination would now certainly be North America, we despatched Admiral Byron with a powerful squadron to reinforce Howe on that station. Unfortunately Byron met with a succession of violent storms which disabled half his fleet, and so greatly delayed the progress of those which were able to continue their voyage, that the French fleet, which consisted of twelve sail of the line and four frigates, under Admiral the Count d'Estaing, arrived on the American coast long before him, appearing on the 11th of July off Sandy Hook, in the harbour behind which Howe was lying, with the view of keeping up his communications with the army, which at that time had its headquarters in New York. The British fleet was greatly inferior in strength to that of the French. D'Estaing's flagship, the *Languedoc*, carried ninety guns ; another had eighty ; six more were seventy-fours ; three were sixty-fours ; one only, *Le Sagittaire*, had so few as fifty guns ; while of our eleven ships none carried more than sixty-four guns, three had



fifty, and two only forty. With a force so disproportioned, and the knowledge that the safety of the army depended on that of his ships, Howe could not venture to gratify his own inclinations and the eager desire of his sailors, by issuing into the open sea to attack the enemy ; but, as he fully expected to be attacked by them, he made arrangements for giving them a warm reception, reinforced his crews by drafts of men from the transports belonging to the army, and showed such firm resolution to maintain his ground, that, in spite of his great superiority, the Frenchman shrank from assailing him. D'Estaing remained off Sandy Hook for nearly a fortnight, and then withdrew towards the North ; and he was hardly out of sight when a seventy-four, a seventy, and two fifty-gun ships belonging to Byron's squadron arrived, and joined Howe ; who, being now equal to D'Estaing in the number of his guns, though still far inferior in weight of metal, and even more so in the quality of his ships, since the new comers had been sadly strained on their passage out, at once quitted the shelter of Sandy Hook, and pursued the French Admiral in the hope of bringing him to battle. On the 9th of August he found him in Narragansett Harbour, whither he had gone to co-operate with a powerful French and American army in an attack upon the province of Rhode Island, which still maintained its loyalty to the British crown. D'Estaing had only arrived there the day before, and, in the confidence of superior strength, was not at first displeased to be overtaken by his enemy ; for whom, though he had shrunk from the attempt to force his strong position behind Sandy Hook, he expected to prove more than a match in the open sea. He accordingly quitted his anchorage, and advanced towards the British fleet ; but, when he saw our compact line, and evident state of preparation, he changed his mind, and, though he was ashamed to retreat, shrank from commencing a battle which a few hours before he

had seemed to invite. For two days the hostile fleets manœuvred in front of each other without coming to close quarters: Howe, knowing himself to be the weaker, trying every expedient to gain the weather-gage; D'Estaing, who had that advantage originally, manœuvring to keep it, and, though from his position he could have forced a battle at any moment, not venturing to attack an enemy who, in spite of his inferiority, showed so bold a front. At last, when two days had been spent in these fruitless displays of seamanship, Howe's patience began to give way, and he resolved, whether to windward or to leeward, to engage the next morning; but, on the night of the 11th, a storm of unusual violence fell on both fleets. We sustained considerable damage, but the French were far more injured than we. The Languedoc was so crippled that one of our fifty-gun ships, the *Renown*, Captain Dawson, attacked and would have captured her, had not an entire squadron of French seventy-fours borne down to the rescue of their admiral; and, in a similar manner, the *Tonnant*, 80, was almost taken by the *Preston*, 50, Captain Hotham, and was only saved by her comrades. Another of our fifty-gun ships, the *Isis*, very nearly made prize of the *Cæsar*, 74, under circumstances still more creditable to the skill and gallantry of Captain Raynor, who commanded her, inasmuch as the *Cæsar* had received little or no injury from the storm. After a fierce combat of upwards of an hour and a-half within pistol-shot, the *Cæsar* had lost two hundred and twenty-men killed and wounded, while the casualties on board the *Isis* amounted to only sixteen. At the end of that time the *Cæsar* put up her helm and bore away, trusting that she had made too much havoc in the rigging of the *Isis* for that vessel to pursue her, and so it proved. Captain Raynor missed his prize, but he was consoled for his undeserved disappointment by the marked commendation of his admiral, and the unanimous admiration of the whole fleet.

D'Estaing retired to Boston, whither Howe pursued him ; then, finding that the French were busy in repairing their damages, the British Admiral returned to New York, and shortly afterwards, when Byron himself arrived, he gave up the fleet to that officer, and sailed for England. Byron, on assuming the command, moved up once more to Boston, in hopes of a battle, but D'Estaing would not come out ; and another storm descended on our fleet, and, having greatly crippled our ships, which were previously in a very bad condition, compelled them once more to fall back behind Sandy Hook. During the remainder of the year nothing was done by the main fleets in the American waters ; but one small squadron, under Commodore Evans, expelled the French from the islands of Miquelon and St. Pierre, on the coast of Newfoundland ; and another, under Captain Parker, co-operated with a land-force under Colonel Campbell in the capture of Savannah, which led to the reduction of the entire province of Georgia : while these advantages were counterbalanced by the success of an expedition which the Marquis de Bouillé, the French Governor of Martinique, despatched against our island of Dominica ; and before the end of the year, the war, as far as the fleets were concerned, became transferred to that quarter. In December, D'Estaing, quitting Boston, moved towards the South : and just at the same time, Admiral Barrington, with a squadron of seven sail of the line, and a few frigates and smaller vessels, in conjunction with an army of four thousand men under General Grant, attacked Santa Lucie. He only arrived off that island on the 13th ; and had scarcely landed the troops, and commenced operations, when D'Estaing arrived with a fleet of double his strength. The French admiral had just been at Martinique, and, agreeing to co-operate with De Bouillé in an attack on Barbadoes, had embarked a powerful army of nine thousand French infantry on board his ships, when they heard of Barrington's movements and



the comparative weakness of his force, and changed their plan into one for cutting it off. Had they been one day earlier they must have succeeded ; but Barrington, though surprised at the appearance of so formidable a foe, was not dismayed, and took his measures with great presence of mind and skill. He was lying in Carenage Bay, and, as the entrance to it was fortunately of no great width, he moored his best ships across it in such a manner as to neutralise the French superiority of numbers. In this position he not only beat off two attacks of the French Admiral, but actually sent out his boats and captured an American privateer under his eyes, and at last D'Estaing retired, and left Saint Lucie to its fate. At the end of the month it capitulated ; and at the beginning of the next Byron arrived from New York, and took Barrington under his command.

Again some months were passed in comparative inaction. Twice D'Estaing returned towards Sainte Lucie, as if with the intention of bringing our fleet to action, but as often he thought better of it and retired ; till in June, 1779, hearing that Byron had moved up to St. Christopher's, he took advantage of his absence to master the island of St. Vincent, and from thence he proceeded against the more important island of Grenada. Lord Macartney, the governor, was a brave soldier, but his garrison was wholly unequal to cope with the force now brought against him ; for D'Estaing's fleet amounted to twenty-five sail of the line and twelve frigates, and it had on board upwards of six thousand five hundred troops. They appeared of Grenada on the 2nd of July, and on the 4th Macartney, after having endured a heavy cannonade, and having replied to it with a fire which inflicted no slight loss on his assailants, found himself totally overpowered, and surrendered at discretion. Thirty merchantmen, with cargoes of great value, fell into the hands of



the French : and they had scarcely had time to reckon up their prizes when Byron came in sight. He was returning from St. Kitts to Sainte Lucie, when he heard of the fall of St. Vincent, and presently learnt that since that event the enemy had been seen sailing towards Grenada. He instantly dispatched a fast sailingsloop to Lord Macartney with news of his approach, and following with all speed, reached the island on the 6th, to find it in the possession of the French. They had seen him at a distance, and, knowing his great inferiority to themselves, were quitting their anchorage to give him battle, for he had but twenty-one ships and one frigate, and they were also in general far less heavily armed than those of the enemy. Byron had not supposed the French to be as strong as he now saw that they were : nevertheless he at once formed in line of battle, and about mid-day on the 6th attacked them with great vigour. Though D'Estaing had at first intended to fight, yet, as had happened in the preceding year, the boldness of his enemy when he came to close quarters with him changed his mind ; and he now took every pains to avoid a decisive action which, as the wind was in his favour, was very much in his power. Byron was admirably seconded by Barrington, and by his leading ships, which alone were able to close with the enemy. Those French ships, too, which were engaged, behaved well, even while making every exertion to increase the distance between themselves and the British. The action continued till sunset, and the next morning the French were out of sight. In men their loss was infinitely greater than ours, their killed and wounded amounting to two thousand seven hundred men, while our casualties did not greatly exceed five hundred ; but, as they had directed the principal weight of their fire at our masts and rigging, several of our ships were so greatly crippled as to render it necessary to send them to some port where they could repair their damages. Towards the end of the summer

Byron returned to England, leaving the command to Rear-Admiral Hyde Parker, who had great success in capturing the merchantmen belonging both to France and the United States with which those seas then swarmed, and on one occasion also he took an entire squadron of three fine frigates.

In fact in every part of the American seas we were entirely triumphant. D'Estaing was even unable, with all his great superiority of force to reconquer Savannah; while no inferiority of numbers prevented our commanders from assailing the enemy wherever they met with them. One very gallant and useful achievement was performed by Commodore Sir George Collier, under the most unfavourable circumstances. Though the revolted colonies had of course at first had no navy, they saw the importance of such a force, and by the beginning of 1779 had collected a considerable number of frigates and smaller vessels. In August a squadron of eighteen sail, escorting an equal number of transports, sailed up to the coast of Maine, to attack the British General M'Lean, who had lately occupied the district around the mouth of the Penobscot, and was strengthening himself there by the erection of one or two forts. Collier heard of their design, and sailed to M'Lean's assistance with such promptitude that they had scarcely begun their operations when he was reported to be in sight. His force consisted of one sixty-four gun ship, the *Raisonnable*, five frigates, and a sloop. The largest frigate of the enemy carried thirty-two guns: altogether they had three hundred and thirty guns to the Commodore's two hundred and two; yet the moment they heard of his approach they prepared to flee, but were unable to get clear of the river before he reached it and hemmed them in. His presence seems almost to have terrified them out of all power of resistance. With scarcely any loss to himself, he took or burnt every vessel; while the land-force which they had conveyed had

the greatest difficulty in making its way overland to its own territory.

We must retrace our steps to Europe, and to the beginning of our operations against France. War had not been formally declared when the British ministry, acting in a wiser spirit of precaution than prompted many acts of Lord North's ministry, sent Admiral Keppel in the *Victory* with a powerful fleet of twenty-three \* sail to cruise off Brest, and to prevent the fleet lying in that harbour from putting to sea, and also to hinder the Toulon fleet from entering Brest to form a junction with it, should any such attempt be made. In one respect his instructions were of a very singular character, since, while he was ordered in the usual terms to do his best "to take or destroy" any fleets or line-of-battle ship she might meet, in case of his falling in with any frigates he was to order them to return to port, and was only to seize them in the event of their refusal. He was promised also that other ships should be equipped with all speed in order to join him, in the event of his finding the Brest fleet superior in number to his own, and therefore of his requiring a reinforcement. He had scarcely reached his station when he did fall in with two frigates whose object was so clearly to reconnoitre his fleet, that he despatched two of his own frigates to summon them alongside his flagship. One, the *Licorne*, obeyed; the other, *La Belle Poule*, resisted, and for sometime maintained a vigorous action with the *Arethusa*, Captain Marshall, till, as night came on, she effected her escape among the shoals of her own coast, while the British frigate was too much crippled in her rigging to pursue her. The next morning the *Licorne* tried to escape, and fired her broadside into one of our ships of

\* It is generally called twenty or twenty-one, but in the 'Life of Lord Keppel,' vol. ii. p. 25, a list is given of twenty-one sail, which sailed with Keppel from Spithead June 13th, and it is added that the *Formidable*, 90, and the *Belleisle*, 64, joined him shortly afterwards.



the line, on which Keppel seized her as a prize, and, examining her papers, was surprised to find that the French fleet in Brest amounted to thirty-two sail of the line and twelve frigates. With such a force he at once decided that he was unable to cope, and returned to Spithead for the promised reinforcements. They were ready for him, and on the 9th of July he again put to sea with a splendid fleet of thirty sail of the line and four frigates. With him were the Vice-Admirals Sir Hugh Palliser and Sir Robert Harland, and among his captains were Jervis in the *Foudroyant*, 80, and in the *Robust*, 74, Captain Alexander Hood, afterwards Lord Bridport. The French fleet had quitted Brest the day before; the commander-in-chief was the Comte d'Orvilliers; and among the subordinate admirals was a prince of the blood, the Duc de Chartres, subsequently known as that Duc d'Orleans who voted for the murder of his relation and King, the hapless Louis. He was one of the vilest of cowards; and being also given, as such people sometimes are, to boasting of the exploits he intended to perform, he had lately announced to Sir George Rodney, at Paris, his appointment to a command in the fleet which was to combat Keppel. Rodney predicted that the result of the meeting would be that His Royal Highness would be conducted to England to learn English; but he and his commander did their best to defeat the prophecy by avoiding the battle for which he had professed so much eagerness.

Before he regained his old station off Brest, Keppel learnt that the French were at sea; and accordingly he kept off the land to search for them. The weather was so hazy that the two fleets nearly passed one another unconsciously; but on the afternoon of the 23rd the fog suddenly cleared off, and, to the surprise of both, they found themselves within a few miles of each other, some leagues to the west of Ushant. D'Orvilliers had probably been ignorant of Keppel's return to England for reinforcements. At



all events he believed him to be far weaker than he really was, and at first showed every inclination to fight; but when, on approaching nearer, he ascertained the real strength of the British fleet, he showed that he had no idea of engaging on equal terms. He resolved to decline the battle, and his possession of the weather-gage enabled him to do so. His conduct was a practical acknowledgment of the inferiority of French to British sailors, for more equal fleets could not be found. The French line-of-battle ships exceeded the English in number by two; but the English ships were rather the larger, and the English had two thousand two hundred and seventy-eight guns to two thousand two hundred and seventy-six that composed the armament of the French. In frigates D'Orvilliers had a decided advantage; but, however useful they might be before or after the battle, in the actual conflict they were not likely to have much weight. A fairer opportunity for testing the naval merits of the two nations could not be imagined. D'Orvilliers, however, kept away, and the next day was seen moving off in full retreat. Keppel signalling to his fleet to form in line of battle, and to chase, pursued with every sail his ships could carry, and, as two of the Frenchmen had fallen to leeward, he endeavoured to cut them off, in the hope of thus forcing his antagonist to a battle in order to save them. D'Orvilliers thought more of saving himself, and left the stragglers to their fate; their speed enabled them to escape, but they were unable to rejoin their comrades. The 24th, the 25th, the 26th passed without any variation of the circumstances or relative positions of the two fleets. The French continued their retreat; we continued our pursuit. In the afternoon of the 26th Keppel, thinking he was losing time by keeping his fleet in line-of-battle, hauled down that signal which had been constantly flying from the time he first saw the enemy, but still kept up the signal to continue to chase.

The French ships, however, as has been mentioned before, were generally superior to ours in sailing qualities, so that the chase would in all probability have been entirely fruitless, had not the wind suddenly shifted on the morning of the 27th from south-west to west-south-west; and, though this does not appear a very great change, it was sufficient to prevent the French Admiral from any longer having the entire option of engaging in or avoiding a battle. It put it in Keppel's power to force on at least a partial action, and he instantly prepared to avail himself of the chance thus unexpectedly afforded him; but he found himself in some difficulty. The eagerness with which he had hitherto pressed on the chase had somewhat scattered his fleet. Harland was four miles off, on the Victory's weather quarter; Palliser, in the Formidable, was three miles or more to leeward, and, as the way in which he handled his ship seemed to show a disposition to increase that distance, Keppel, desiring to unite his squadron to his own, signalled to Palliser to chase to windward. Finding an action inevitable, D'Orvilliers, to preserve his line of battle unbroken, caused his fleet to wear; but that and some other evolutions threw them into great disorder, and brought them nearer to the enemy whom their chief object was to avoid. These manœuvres had occupied nearly four hours. At last, a little before noon, Keppel made the signal to attack, and Sir Robert Harland, who commanded the van division, led the fleet gallantly into battle, passing along the French line, receiving their fire without returning it till he came up to their leading ships. Keppel followed with the centre, in like manner reserving his fire till he got alongside the French Admiral himself, whom he had marked for his own especial antagonist, and was soon joined by Palliser and his squadron. For near two hours both fleets were hotly engaged. The loss of life was lightest in ours; but, from the French practice of aiming chiefly at

the rigging, many of our ships were far more crippled than any of theirs. Keppel's own flagship, the *Victory*, had received great damage ; and five more of our ships were so much disabled, that the Admiral was not altogether without apprehension of losing some of them. Palliser's ship, the *Formidable*, had suffered as severely as any, and Sir Hugh had been the first to quit the line. When the battle had lasted nearly two hours, with a view of enabling him to renew the action, and also of protecting the crippled ships, Keppel made the signal to wear. Harland and his division obeyed ; but Palliser took no notice of the signal, making no attempt to renew the action himself, and, as was afterwards alleged, by his example preventing the rest of his division from going to the Admiral's support. Later in the afternoon, Keppel sent a frigate to him with an express order to bear down ; but night came on, and it was not till daylight the next morning that the *Formidable* again took up the station assigned her. But long before that time all hope of renewing the battle had passed away. The lights of the enemy had been visible to our men all night ; but, when day broke, it was discovered that they proceeded from only three ships. D'Orvilliers had stolen away with his main body, and, to prevent any suspicion of his flight from occurring to the British Admiral, he had left three of his fastest sailers to keep up the same lights that were shown by the flagship, with instructions to set all sail and rejoin him as soon as daylight should reveal to the English the delusion that had been practised. Once more Keppel chased for an hour or two ; and then, finding his endeavours to overtake the enemy perfectly fruitless, he returned to Plymouth to repair the damage he had received.

No ship was taken on either side, the number of our killed and wounded did not amount to above three-fourths of the loss sustained by the French ; but the question of who were the victors in the battle was most clearly deter-



mined by a proof far more incontestable than any such minute calculation. The flight of the French, for their course on the 28th can be called by no other name, acknowledged their defeat in the most forcible manner. But, after having made such efforts to fit out a sufficient fleet, the British nation was not contented with a victory which required arithmetic and logic to prove it to have been one. Murmurs soon began to be heard, which presently assumed the definite shape of complaints, that Palliser, by his disobedience to his commander's signals, had prevented the renewal of the action, and by so doing had enabled the French to escape. In his official despatch Keppel was so far from having complained of Palliser's behaviour that he expressly named him as, "by his spirited conduct, having deserved much commendation." But hints soon got abroad that his real feelings on the subject were at variance with those which he had thought it judicious to express in a public letter; and, before the fleet arrived in England, paragraphs had appeared in the newspapers imputing Keppel's failure to obtain a decisive victory to Palliser's disobedience to signals; and even denying the latter the credit of having borne a vigorous part in the short action which did take place, by attributing the loss of men in the *Formidable*, not to the enemy's fire, but to an accidental explosion of her own cartridges. Indications also had been already given of an inclination to make the conduct of the two Admirals, who were both in Parliament, a party question. Palliser was not only a supporter of Lord North's Ministry, but a Lord of the Admiralty; Keppel was a member of the Opposition, and on terms of extreme intimacy with its leaders. So, while the Admiralty abstained from taking any favourable notice of his conduct in the late battle, the Opposition extolled the battle itself as a decisive triumph, and the Admiral as a victorious hero. The sparks of rivalry thus kindled soon burst into a flame. On the arrival of the fleet in England



Palliser demanded of Keppel that he should publish a denial of the hints to his discredit which had been promulgated. Keppel refused, alleging that it did not become him, as Commander-in-chief of a British fleet, to notice anonymous paragraphs or to write in a newspaper; and Palliser then wrote a letter in his own name to the *Morning Post*, giving his own version of the action, and of his own and the Admiral's share in it, in language which Captain Jervis at once denounced to Keppel as "replete with art, vanity, and falsehood."\* Jervis wholly acquitted Palliser of cowardice, and even of designed treachery towards the Admiral, (for that was the notion which Keppel's friends were learning to adopt), but thought him guilty of the grossest negligence on record, and ascribed his conduct to the confusion and disorder produced in the *Formidable*, by the explosion.

The ill-feeling created and favoured by these discussions broke out with vehemence on the meeting of Parliament in November. Both parties in the State, and both the Admirals appeared equally eager to press the question to a formal decision. Palliser made a set speech to defend himself from the imputations that had been levelled at him; and Keppel in reply expressly charged him with wilful disobedience. The next step in the affair was a singular one. Instead of Keppel's bringing his subordinate officer to trial on a charge thus formally advanced, Palliser preferred an accusation against him. The Admiralty received it, and ordered a court-martial to be held on the Commander-in-chief, without, however, depriving him of the command of the Channel Fleet, which he still held. The act of putting an officer in such a position on his trial on such grounds, created great indignation in the profession, and twelve of the most distinguished admirals in the service, at the head of whom was the illustrious veteran Lord

\* See Jervis's Letter, 'Life of Keppel,' vol. ii. p. 79.

Hawke, addressed a formal remonstrance against it to the King himself, as injurious to the discipline of the navy, to public order, and to the general interests of the whole kingdom; but the edict for the assembling of the court could hardly be recalled, and in the first week of the new year the trial took place at Portsmouth. By a special Act of Parliament, passed in consequence of the weak state of the prisoner's health, it was held at the Governor's house instead of on board the flagship, and it lasted for upwards of five weeks. The Opposition made a strong muster: the leaders in both Houses, Lord Rockingham and the Duke of Richmond, Burke, Fox, and Sheridan, and even two of the Royal Princes, the Dukes of Cumberland and Gloucester, quitting their Parliamentary duties to attend the Admiral daily to the court. But the members themselves conducted the trial with great firmness, dignity, and impartiality. The charges were that, on the 27th of July, the Admiral had not only failed to draw up his fleet in line of battle, but that, although it was already dispersed and in disorder, he by his ill-judged signals had increased that disorder; and that it was owing to the "unofficerlike" want of method in those signals that "a general engagement was not brought on." A second article accused him of failing to take the proper steps to renew the action, and by his management of his own division, exposing Palliser to be cut off by the enemy. Other articles varied rather the terms than the spirit of the first two, adding that "instead of advancing to renew the engagement, as he might and ought to have done, the Admiral made sail away from the enemy, giving them an opportunity to rally, and presenting the appearance of a flight, disgraceful to the British flag." And the last continued the accusation to the day following, accusing him of failing on the morning of the 28th to pursue the main body of the French fleet, or even the three ships that had been left behind. Nearly every captain in the fleet

was examined on one side or the other, and Keppel read an elaborate and skilfully drawn defence of his whole conduct. He complained with reason of the conduct of the Admiralty in refusing him permission to produce his instructions ; and, travelling beyond the charges, justified every part of his conduct since he had taken the command. He affirmed that Palliser's private letters to himself were in direct contradiction to the charges which were now brought against him, and he certainly proved that some of the assertions which his accuser had made were absolutely untrue.

Throughout the trial the public feeling had been unmistakably shown in the prisoner's favour ; and when on the 11th of February the court-martial unanimously acquitted him, and pronounced the charges malicious and ill-founded, it vented itself not only in the most general illuminations that had been seen in the reign, but in violent attacks upon all who were supposed not to sympathise with the verdict. One mob attacked Sir Hugh's house in Pall Mall, dragged the furniture into the street and made a bonfire of it ; another mob burnt himself in effigy on Tower Hill. The windows of the ministers were broken, and an attempt was even made to storm the Admiralty. So formidable were the riots that the soldiers were called out, and it was not till some lives had been lost that order could be restored.

The result of Keppel's trial almost necessitated the subjection of Palliser to a similar ordeal. In Parliament and before the court he had been expressly charged with disobedience to orders ; and Keppel, in his defence, had justified his commendation of him in his public dispatch which appeared incompatible with such a charge, plausibly arguing that " a commander-in-chief is not bound in the midst of a critical service to disclose to all Europe his opinion of any of his officers," and also that " a power of passing over faults or mistakes is essential to the good of

the service." He therefore was tried in April, and, though the Court blamed him for not having made known to his commander the degree in which the Formidable had been crippled by the explosion, which was alleged as the reason for his subsequent neglect of Keppel's signals, they found that his "conduct had been in many respects highly exemplary and meritorious," and in general terms acquitted him also of the charges brought against him.

As soon as the first verdict was given, both Houses of Parliament passed a vote of thanks to Keppel for his conduct in the battle; and it seems to have been generally expected that he would resume his command of the Channel Fleet, from which he had not been displaced, but he did not do so. He was disappointed and angry. After the battle in July he had a second time returned to England, and as soon as he had repaired his damages he had again put to sea in pursuit of D'Orvilliers, who was still cruising off Ushant. But, though he more than once heard of the French fleet, he could never succeed in falling in with it; he was also in very indifferent health, and, above all, he was indignant beyond measure at the treatment which he had received from the Admiralty. He now wrote a long letter to the King himself, full of loyal respect and duty towards His Majesty; but equally full of complaints of the Ministers, as men in whose hands his reputation could not be safe for a moment. On this ground he intimated his wish to be allowed to strike his flag. And the Admiralty, professing to be greatly aggrieved by his letter, ordered him to do so. He never went to sea again. Three years afterwards, when his friend Lord Rockingham became Prime Minister, he was raised to the peerage and was appointed to preside over the Admiralty, in which capacity he displayed great zeal for the service, energy and judgment. Short as was the period during which he held that office, it is to him that is owing the general adoption of that great improvement in shipbuilding, the use of copper for



sheathing the bottom of ships. It had been tried on a few vessels some years earlier; but it was left for him to establish it as a general practice, and by so doing to add greatly to the efficiency of our navy in respect of the handiness, speed, and durability of our ships. The two first qualities indispensable as against the enemy; the last being of even greater importance as affecting the lives and safety of the gallant sailors who man them.

In the spring of 1779 Spain united her forces to those of France; but neither country had much reason to plume itself on the results of this new alliance. In the West Indies and adjacent waters, Admiral Parker captured four French frigates, and took or destroyed the whole of a valuable fleet of merchantmen under their escort. And Captain Luttrell, with a squadron of two frigates and two smaller vessels, aided by a small land-force under Captain Dalrymple, attacked the Spanish fort of Omoa, in the Bay of Honduras, and captured it, with two galleons and several private merchantmen, laden with cargoes of enormous value, that were lying in the harbour. In Europe they fared no better. The French made an attack on Jersey, which was not only unsuccessful, but which resulted in the destruction of the attacking force; for, after they had been driven from that island by one squadron under Captain Gidoin, another, consisting of three frigates and two sloops under Sir James Wallace, pursued them into Cancale Bay, burnt two frigates, captured and brought off a third and two smaller vessels, while the total amount of our loss did not exceed twenty killed and wounded.

But our allied enemies paid no regard to these misfortunes on a small scale, directing all their efforts to gain one great triumph which should make all minor successes or losses insignificant. The great inducement which had led the Spaniards to join in the war was the hope of recovering Gibraltar; and France had learnt that, if she proposed to cope with us in the Mediterranean, its

recapture was as desirable to French interests, as, in any event, it was to Spanish pride. Accordingly, the instant that Spain declared war against us, she began to blockade the unassailable fortress on both sides, establishing a camp at St. Roque, and keeping a strong fleet at the mouth of the Straits to prevent the introduction of supplies ; while to deter us from sending any large force to its succour, we were threatened with an invasion of our own shores. An army of fifty thousand men was collected at St. Malo ; to protect its passage, the French quitted Brest, effected a junction with the Spaniards who issued from Cadiz ; and, at the beginning of August, the combined fleets swept down the Channel with a force such as had not been seen in it since the days of Van Tromp and De Ruyter. Sixty-six sail of the line, under D'Orvilliers as commander-in-chief, sailed in apparent triumph as far as Plymouth. In less than a month they were again in their own harbours, having effected absolutely nothing but the capture of one British ship, the *Ardent*, 64, who, mistaking them for a British force, sailed among them, and had no choice but to surrender. They failed in intercepting Admiral Darby, who, with a small fleet had lately escorted a valuable convoy into the open sea, and who returned in spite of them safe to Spithead. They equally failed to surprise a vast fleet of West Indiamen, whose capture would have enriched the whole body of their seamen, numerous as they were. Presently the two commanders, D'Orvilliers and Don Louis de Cordova, began to quarrel : Don Louis urging the immediate transport of the French army to our shores, and D'Orvilliers insisting on the destruction of our fleet as a necessary preliminary ; till at last, when our fleet appeared before them, they could not make up their minds to fight it at all. Not that it was in any respect equal to the encounter ; the commander who had succeeded Keppel was Sir Charles Hardy, an officer to whom there was nothing to object but that he had

rather too much experience. Forty years before, he had gained a good reputation in the first Spanish war; twenty years before, he had been second in command to Boscawen at Louisbourg, and had worthily supported that most dashing officer; but now age had somewhat quenched the fire of his earlier days. His fleet was still less fit to cope with the enemy than the commander. He had but thirty-eight ships; and, even when successive reinforcements had placed every available vessel under his orders, they amounted to no more than forty-six: being still inferior by almost a third to the great combined armada which was thus alarming our shores with threats which its leaders had not the resolution to carry out. Hardy was at Spit-head when first the news of the approach of the combined fleet reached him. He at once sailed to the westward, but before he reached the Cornish coast, the enemy had retired towards the Scilly Isles: thinking, as was supposed, that the more open the sea the better they should be able to avail themselves of their superiority of numbers. But when the British Admiral, resolved on observing all their motions, approached, they retired to a still greater distance; and presently, for fear of the equinoctial gales, returned to their own harbours.

Hitherto it could not be said that the war, as between us and our European enemies, had been of a very eventful character, but for the remainder of its duration it was of a very different complexion. In America the contest was already virtually decided against us: but, to make amends for our disasters in that quarter, in every other part of the globe we enjoyed a series of most brilliant successes. At the beginning of 1780 the attention of the combatants on both sides was fixed on Gibraltar, where the blockade, which had now been kept up for upwards of half a year, had reduced the garrison to such distress as it was evident that human nature could not long support. All ordinary food had been consumed, and vermin were sold at a price that

the greatest delicacies did not usually command : unless speedy relief were practicable, it was plain that the great fortress which could defeat all other enemies, must yield to famine. Fortunately for our glory and our power, Sir George Rodney had just been appointed to the command of a splendid fleet, bound for the station of the Leeward Islands ; and he was enjoined to take under his protection a convoy of vessels laden with supplies for the beleaguered fortress, and to conduct them into Gibraltar before proceeding to his command. Among his captains was Duncan ; and even among those who as yet had no commission, one name must be mentioned. Prince William Henry (afterwards King William IV.) was a midshipman in the Prince George, the flagship of Rear-Admiral Digby, the second in command ; and, after the action that ensued, it is recorded that nothing so much excited the astonishment of the Spanish Admiral, as the sight of a prince of the blood royal in a position of real, not nominal, subordination, going through the routine of his duty in the same manner, and showing the same deference to his superior officers that would have been expected from his comrades. The presence of the Spanish blockading fleet was known, but as Rodney had twenty-one sail of the line and nine frigates, it was expected that he would be able to drive that away without difficulty, and fortune threw advantages in his way which had not been calculated on. He had scarcely got clear of the Bay of Biscay, and had detached a fleet of merchantmen bound for the West Indies to proceed to their destination under a competent escort, when his path was crossed by a fleet apparently as large as his own, which proved to consist of fifteen vessels laden with every kind of provisions, supplies, and naval stores, which had just set sail from St. Sebastian for the West Indies, under the protection of seven ships of war, one of which was of the line. He captured the whole of them, adding those whose cargo consisted of food to the convoy he already



had under his charge for Gibraltar. Those laden with naval stores he despatched with two of his own ships to England. Without delaying a moment he proceeded on his way ; and when he arrived off Cape St. Vincent, that promontory which has witnessed more of our battles and triumphs than any other headland in the world, his frigates gave notice of a fleet being in sight, which he did not doubt to be the same whose presence was causing such distress to his beleaguered countrymen at Gibraltar. It had been reported to consist of fourteen ships ; but it was soon made out as numbering at this time only nine sail of the line, and two frigates. Rodney had still nineteen sail of the line around him, so that the Spanish Admiral could not be blamed for endeavouring to avoid an action. But Rodney's measures were taken with too much promptitude to give him a chance of escape. Knowing the enemy to be in the neighbourhood, he had his force in readiness even before he came in sight of them,\* and the moment that they were seen he bore down upon them in line of battle. It was the 16th of January, and midday was past ; so after a short time, fearing lest, if he preserved his line, he might not overtake the enemy before dark, and that in the night they might escape him altogether, at two o'clock he hauled down the signal for the line of battle, and substituted one commanding a general chase. Even then it was four o'clock before the leading ships came up with the enemy, but with these he instantly attacked ;\* in little more than half an hour the *San Domingo*, 70, blew up, and the whole of her crew perished. Presently another ship struck ; but the Spaniards fought with undaunted courage, and the weather, which became very rough, protracted the combat by diverting the attention of

\* It is worth remarking that the four ships which first got into action, the *Defence*, Captain Cranston; the *Resolution*, Sir C. Ogle; the *Edgar*, Captain Elliott; and the *Bedford*, Captain Affleck, were all coppered, and owed to this circumstance the power of outailing their comrades.

the sailors to other work besides fighting. It was two o'clock in the morning when Rodney's own ship, the *Sandwich*, which had hitherto been engaged in the centre, passed on to the *Monarca*, the headmost ship of the enemy's fleet, and by a single broadside, the last that was fired, compelled her to strike, and the extent of the victory was not ascertained till day broke on the 17th. It was then found that besides the *San Domingo*, which had blown up, six sail of the line were captured. The Spanish Admiral himself, Don Juan de Langara, whose flag had been borne in the *Phoenix*, 80, had surrendered to the *Defence*, 74, Captain Cranston, and the *Bienfaisant*, 64, Captain McBride. Of the whole fleet two only, besides the frigates, had escaped, and they were both greatly damaged. The exceeding roughness of the weather which continued for several days, drove two of the prizes on shore, and made Rodney anxious for the safety of his own ship, and of one or two others which had received the greatest injury in the fight; but the importance of the victory was to be measured not by the trophies which the conqueror conducted to Gibraltar, but by the effectual relief of that fortress, which was now abundantly re-victualled, and secured for a time from the only peril which could threaten it. The safety of Minorca, too, was ensured by the same blow, since our garrison on that island was known to be in great distress for provisions, and was in daily expectation of an attack, which, without supplies, it could have been in no condition to resist; but a portion of the convoy under Rodney's protection was destined for Port Mahon, and by its arrival placed that important post also out of danger.

Nor was the service that Rodney on this occasion did his country confined to his warlike achievements. His gentler virtues likewise had a great effect in softening the animosity which a state of war is apt to engender. The treatment which British prisoners had met with in Spain

had hitherto been severe and even cruel ; but Rodney treated those Spaniards who now fell into his hands with a humanity which won from the Spaniards not only a grateful acknowledgment, but an honourable emulation. He even forbore to remove Langara and his crew from the *Phoenix*, because the smallpox was in the *Bienfaisant*, the ship which, as the immediate captor of the *Phoenix*, would naturally have received them. At the Admiral's request he freely released some ecclesiastics who had been taken, and so conciliated the Spanish authorities on shore that they consented to a general exchange of prisoners. Rodney was soon able to assert with truth that, though the Spanish Government was in alliance with the French and at war with us, the Spanish nation was far more friendly to us than to the French. All ranks, indeed, still thirsted to recover Gibraltar, and, as we shall presently see, made gigantic efforts for that object ; but the warfare between the two countries was henceforth divested of its rancour. And though, after the termination of the present war, Spain, under the influences of French counsels, again arrayed herself against us, a friendly feeling smouldered beneath the crust of hostility, and eventually pierced and overpowered it ; and of this friendliness the first seeds were sown by the humanity displayed by Rodney on the present occasion.

## CHAPTER XV.

1780 — 1783.

Rodney goes to the West Indies — Drives De Guichen from Sainte Lucie — Indecisive battle — Misconduct of some of the English captains — Rodney goes to New York — Terrible storm — Nelson at Fort St. Juan — Rodney returns to the Leeward Islands — War with Holland — Rodney takes St. Eustatia — De Grasse arrives with a large fleet — Sir S. Hood's action — Arbuthnot's action off the Chesapeake — Rodney returns home — Graves's action — Surrender of Lord Cornwallis — Action off the Dogger Bank — Rodney returns with a reinforcement — The French take St. Christopher's, Nevis, &c. — The new ministry recall Rodney — He defeats De Grasse and takes him prisoner — He is made a peer and returns home — Darby relieves Gibraltar — Failure of the Spanish attack — Loss of the Royal George — Howe relieves Gibraltar — Skirmish with the combined fleets — Johnstone repulses Suffrein — Takes a squadron of merchantmen in Saldanha Bay — We take Trincomalee — The French combine with Hyder Ali — Five battles between Sir Edward Hughes and M. de Suffrein — We gain the advantage — The French retake Trincomalee — Peace.

THE moment that the relief of Gibraltar and Minorca was fully accomplished, Rodney quitted the Mediterranean, and crossed the Atlantic to the station of his command. The belief at home was that the enemy intended to put forth their chief strength in the West Indies, and in that quarter, therefore, his arrival was looked for with great anxiety. He lost no time. On the 14th of February he got clear of the Straits, and in the middle of March he reached Barbadoes, where he learnt that the Comte de Guichen, with a magnificent fleet of twenty-three sail of the line and one fifty-gun ship, besides frigates, was off Sainte Lucie, blocking up a British squadron in Gros Islet Bay, and preparing to attack the island itself. Rodney had only twenty-one ships, however he stayed not to calculate odds, but at once set sail for Sainte Lucie; and M. de Guichen, paying an equal disregard to his own superior numbers, made off as soon as he saw him, aban-



done the enterprise he had in hand, and, seeking a refuge at Martinique, anchored in Port Royal Bay. Thither Rodney followed him; and for two days lay in the front of him, penetrating into the bay far enough to count his guns, sometimes even within shot of the batteries on shore. But he could not tempt the Frenchman out; so leaving a squadron of his fastest (that is to say, of his copper-bottomed) ships to watch him, he retired with the main body to Gros Islet Bay, ready to pursue the enemy the moment he should hear they had quitted their present shelter. On the 15th of April he heard that they had left Port Royal, and, instantly weighing anchor and sailing in pursuit, the next day he came in sight of them off the Pearl Rock. At last he fancied his toils were rewarded, and began to exult in the certain expectation of a glorious victory. But he was doomed to a severe disappointment. We have already seen, in Keppel's refusal of the command on the North American station, an instance of the degree in which the spirit of political faction at this time led even brave men to neglect their duty; and in this fleet the same feeling now showed itself in a still more disgraceful and alarming manner. Even before it had quitted Portsmouth, one ship, the *Invincible*, Captain Falconer, had been in a state almost amounting to mutiny. In the battle against *Langara*, the Admiral had been shamefully deserted by several of his captains; and, though he had forborne any public complaint, their misconduct was well known to the authorities at home: and now their disobedience was worse still, and deprived him of a splendid victory after his own skill and personal gallantry had brought it within his grasp. By a series of able manœuvres, on the afternoon of the 16th and during the night, he had gained the wind of the enemy, and thus had it so completely in his own power to compel them to fight, that De Guichen desisted from all attempts to avoid it, and at daybreak, on the 17th, was seen forming his fleet in a line of battle ahead.

Rodney had conceived the design which, on a subsequent occasion, when better supported, he successfully carried out, of directing the weight of his attack first upon one portion only of their fleet, so as to cut off and overpower that before its comrades could aid it; and, with this view, at half-past eight, he changed the signal, which had been flying for the line of battle ahead, into one for the line of battle abreast, and bore down on the enemy's rear. De Guichen, who was a skilful officer, penetrated his intention, and to defeat it, wore his fleet and formed a line of battle on the other tack. Rodney hauled his wind and changed back into a line of battle ahead; these manœuvres necessarily took some time, and it was nearly noon when the British Admiral gave the final signal for every ship to bear down and steer for the ship opposite to her in the enemy's line. The very leading ship, the *Stirling Castle*, Captain Caskett, wholly disobeyed it, and instead of attacking the rear of the French, passed on to the van of their fleet. Those next to the *Stirling Castle* followed her example, and thus, at the very outset of the battle, the British fleet, which Rodney had taken such pains to keep compact, became scattered; and his project of throwing his whole force on one squadron of the enemy, and cutting that off entirely, was baffled and defeated. Many captains, too, disobeyed his signals in a still more flagrant manner, and never fired a single gun during the whole action. Rodney made fresh signals for a closer engagement, and bearing down into the centre of the French line, fought his own ship with such skill and resolution, and kept up from her so rapid and incessant a fire, that in little more than an hour and a half he drove three of the enemy out of the line, which was thus thrown into complete disorder. To restore the battle, De Guichen himself, in *La Couronne*, 80, supported by the *Triomphant*, 80, and *Le Fendant*, 74, gathered round him: but, after a fresh combat of equal duration, the *Sandwich* treated them in the same manner,

and they too sheered off; while the Sandwich was too completely crippled to be able to do anything more that day. She had lost her foremast, she had three shots between wind and water, and nearly seventy of her men were killed or wounded. The French now all bore away; and, had the fleet been in the close order which Rodney's frequent signals had enjoined, he would have shifted his flag and pursued them. But his van and rear were at such a distance from his centre that such a step must have been fruitless, and might even have led to disaster; and so, with a heavy heart, he brought to, and applied himself to repair damages. They were soon repaired: for indeed the greater part of the fleet had received none, and the whole brunt of the battle had been borne by (besides the Sandwich) the Conqueror and the Princess Royal, the flagships of Admiral Rowley and Admiral Parker; the Cornwall, Captain Edwards; the Trident, Captain Molloy; the Grafton, Captain Collingwood; the Ajax, Captain Uvedale; the Intrepid, Captain St. John; and the Terrible, Captain Douglas. By the 19th the fleet was again ready for action; without a moment's loss of time Rodney sailed in pursuit of the flying enemy, and the next day again came in sight of them. They had no inclination for a fresh trial of strength; for three days they fled and he pursued. It was evident to him that they were making for Port Royal in Martinique;\* but, though he could not force them to action, he cut them off from that point, and compelled them to take shelter in Guadaloupe. As he knew, however, that that island afforded them no means of refitting, but that they must ultimately proceed to Martinique for that purpose, he hastened in that direction himself to wait for them: posting frigates in every direction to keep a look-out. Meanwhile he retired to the neighbouring island of Sainte Lucie, to complete his own repairs; coming out when he heard that the French were again in sight. On

\* There is a Port Royal in Martinique, and another in Jamaica.

the 10th of May he once more came up with them to the windward of Martinique, endeavouring to steal into Port Royal. But, though he again cut them off from that point, their position now did not enable him again to force them to a battle ; and whenever he approached, they bore away. For a fortnight the two fleets lay opposite to one another, Rodney trying all kinds of manœuvres to bring the enemy to action, and giving notice to his captains that, if he succeeded, he should quit the Sandwich and hoist his flag in one of the frigates, to see the better who did their duty and who neglected it. To use his own expression, “he taught them to be what they had never been before, *officers.*” And this lesson had an important influence on his own subsequent exploits, and perhaps on the whole subsequent history of the British navy ; but for the present this was all that he could do. Fortune was against him. On one occasion he had out-manœuvred his adversary, and had almost got to windward of him, when the wind shifted, and wrested the advantage from him at the moment that he appeared to have gained it ; and all that he could do was to keep up a running fight with one or two of their rearmost ships for an hour or two, in which Admiral Rowley in the *Conqueror*, and Captain Bowyer of the *Albion*, behaved with great gallantry. A few days later, a second distant skirmish took place, with no more decisive result ; at the end of the fortnight he was forced to desist from this unsatisfactory warfare. The French ships were both better sailers than his own, and also in better condition : for the best of the copper-bottomed ships that he had had with him in his victory over *Langara* he had been ordered to leave in the Mediterranean, and what he had retained under his command were very foul ; while three of them were so far from having been fully repaired since his first action, that they were with difficulty kept afloat at all. Of the whole fleet there were not in reality above ten fit for sea ; and yet with a force in this condition,



he had long defied a far superior fleet of the enemy, and had impressed them with such a conviction of his superior skill, that they were content to suffer any hardship and any disgrace rather than fight with him.

Rodney sent the ships that were most crippled to *Sainte Lucie*, and with the rest he went himself to *Barbadoes*, to put his sick and wounded men on shore, hoping also there to meet with a reinforcement which was expected from *England*. He had now the disagreeable task of deciding on the line of conduct to be adopted towards the officers who had misbehaved on the 17th of April: they amounted to full half of his captains, but those who had had the opportunity had, in the subsequent operations, shown every disposition to retrieve their error; and he decided on confining the examples to be made to the two most flagrant cases. Captain *Bateman* of the *Exmouth*, and Lieutenant *Appleby* of the *Montagu*, who succeeded to the command of her, when her captain was wounded, were brought before a court-martial and cashiered: but the rest he punished no further than by refusing them the certificates of good conduct in the action which he gave to their comrades; and gladly turned his mind rather to preventing any repetition of such misconduct, by drilling the whole fleet to a prompt obedience to signals, putting them, whenever calm weather afforded the opportunity, through a variety of evolutions, and by continual practice ensuring their understanding of both his orders and his objects.

He soon conceived hopes of being able to bring the improvement which he had thus effected in their discipline to the test of actual warfare, since the next month had hardly begun, when he received intelligence of a powerful Spanish fleet being on its way to the *West Indies*. Off *Cadiz* it had fallen in with the *Cerberus*, and Captain *Man*, who commanded her, very judiciously thought its movements of importance enough to justify his quitting his station to bear Rodney the tidings of its approach. Rodney

at once put to sea, in the hope of intercepting it; and presently received further intelligence from his frigates that it amounted to twelve sail of the line, five frigates, and nearly two hundred merchantmen and transports. He got so near it as to cut off one merchantman and one transport; but the remainder got safe into Guadaloupe, and waited there till De Guichen joined them. This the French Admiral soon did, and for a moment there did seem every prospect of a battle. The combined fleets, consisting of thirty-six sail of the line, proceeded to Martinique, and anchored in Port Royal Bay; and Rodney, who had now but seventeen sail of the line and two fifty-gun ships, fully expected they would attack him. The disparity of his force was too great for him to venture into the open sea to encounter them; but he took up a strong position in Gros Islet Bay, and waited for them without dismay, occupying himself, till they should arrive, in aiding the Governor of Sainte Lucie to put the island into a sufficient state of defence. If the reinforcement which he understood to be on its way should join him, he assured the Admiralty that then, if the allies did not attack him, he would attack them.

The reinforcement, however, did not join him in time; for above three months it had lain windbound in the English harbours, and when on the 12th of July it reached Sainte Lucie the enemy was gone. They had lain at Martinique nearly a month in entire inaction, even their superiority of nineteen ships not giving them courage to attack Rodney, and then they separated; the Spanish fleet going to the Havannah, and the French to Cape François. Rodney, believing that De Guichen had gone to the North American coast, detached Admiral Rowley with ten sail to reinforce Sir Peter Parker at Jamaica, and with the rest sailed to New York. His conjecture was not ill-founded; for, in fact, Washington was expecting De Guichen to co-operate with him, but

that officer had quitted the Transatlantic waters for Europe, and in the course of August reached Cadiz, where he united his fleet to another with which D'Estaing was lying in that harbour. He was fortunate in quitting the West Indies when he did, as he thus escaped one of the most fearful hurricanes that ever desolated even those regions. It came on at the beginning of October: so completely converting Barbadoes into a desert, that the Governor reported to the Secretary of State in England, that "he did not believe ten houses were saved on the whole island;" causing equal or even greater destruction at Jamaica, where an earthquake was added to the horrors of the tempest; and falling on the different fleets and squadrons in those waters with an irresistible fury. Many of the finest ships went down before it, crews and all, in the open sea; others were wrecked, with the loss of the greater part of their crews; and even of those which escaped from these extremities of disaster, scarcely one was left fit for further service, without undergoing an entire repair. Rodney too, by his movement to the American coast, escaped the storm; and, having assumed the chief command on that station, he took his measures for distressing the traders and privateers of the United States along their whole seaboard with a skill that ensured success, and that, in fact, inflicted more injury on their naval force than the efforts of all his predecessors put together. He sent one detachment of frigates down to Charleston, and stationed a complete chain of those serviceable vessels along the whole southern coast, which captured nearly all the privateers that ventured out. Another squadron he detached to strengthen Admiral Arbuthnot, who was watching M. de Ternay off Rhode Island; while, as a necessary accompaniment of this success, he afforded such entire protection to our own commerce, that he was able to report to the authorities at home, that all the convoys bound from England and Ireland to New York and Charleston had arrived safe at their destination.

Another exploit that was achieved in these regions in 1780 must not be passed over, though its importance is principally due to its being the first occasion on which Nelson had an opportunity of showing his daring, his fearlessness of responsibility, and the universality of his professional genius. He was not yet twenty-two, but in the summer of the preceding year he had been made a post-captain and appointed to the *Hinchinbroke* frigate, 28, then cruising about Jamaica; and when, at the beginning of 1780, the Governor of that island, General Dalling, projected an attack upon Fort St. Juan, at the entrance of the great lake of Nicaragua, on the Isthmus of Darien, he entrusted the naval part of the expedition to the *Hinchinbroke*. The land-force, which consisted of about five hundred men, was commanded by Major Polson; and it had been intended that Nelson's services should be confined to convoying them in safety to the mainland. But, when they arrived there, the enterprise, as it had been originally planned, proved wholly impracticable in its details; and, had it not been for the extent to which Nelson departed from his orders, it must have failed altogether. The Indian guides, whom Major Polson was directed to trust, never appeared. No one could be found who knew either the river or the surrounding district. But Nelson and his seamen supplied every deficiency. He manned some of the small craft found on the shore, and two of the *Hinchinbroke's* boats with his men, and thus conducted the soldiers up to the fort. After a day or two of hard rowing they were stopped by a small island, on which the Spaniards had placed a ten-gun battery to command the river, of which, at that point, the navigation was exceedingly difficult. Nelson resolved to storm the battery, headed his men as they leaped on shore from the boats; and though the mud was so deep that he lost his shoes, and was forced to advance barefoot to the assault, he never hesitated, but pressed on, drove out the Spaniards,



captured the battery, and, having thus cleared the passage, returned to the boats, and the next day placed his soldiers beneath the walls of the fort. Had his advice been followed, the castle too would have been stormed at once : but Major Polson preferred a more regular operation, and commenced a siege in form. Even then the principal labour fell upon Nelson, who, having already made himself master of every branch of his profession, superintended the construction of the batteries, and with his own hands pointed nearly every gun that was fired. In less than a fortnight the fort surrendered, and both Polson and General Dalling attributed the success of the expedition principally to Nelson's ability and zeal, and to the influence which, even at that early age, he exercised over every one who had the good fortune to be brought into contact with him.

At the end of the year Rodney returned to his station among the Leeward Islands. He had scarcely reached it when he received a considerable reinforcement of ships, and what was of almost equal value, a colleague as second in command, of the very highest reputation and skill in his profession, Sir Samuel Hood. And he soon found that no reinforcement could be too large for the services required of him ; for December added Holland to the list of our enemies, and that wealthy republic had large and valuable possessions in the West Indies, as well as a powerful fleet in her harbours at home, ready to cross the Atlantic for their protection. We need not here enter into the grounds of the quarrel. It may be that the ostensible pretexts on which we justified our declaration of war were hardly of sufficient importance ; but the real truth was that of the two parties which alternately swayed the councils of the Hague, that of Van Berkel the Pensionary, who inclined to France, had obtained a temporary predominance over that of the Stadtholder, the Prince of Orange, who by every hereditary tie and every personal predilection was led to cherish the alliance with ourselves ;

and, where a hostile disposition was clearly ascertained, it was wise policy to anticipate its blows. Accordingly, on the 20th of December, we declared war against Holland ; and information of the fact was instantly sent to Rodney, with a recommendation to make the rich Dutch settlement of St. Eustatia the object of his first attack. No instructions were ever executed with greater alacrity, or greater success. The Admiral did not receive the news till the 27th of January, and within a week he had crossed over to Sainte Lucie, had taken on board General Vaughan, with a sufficient military force, had despatched in advance a squadron of his best sailers under Hood, to prevent any vessels escaping from the harbour of St. Eustatia, had followed with his main body, and captured that island, with half-a-dozen ships of war, and above one hundred and fifty merchantmen, most of which were loaded with cargoes of great value ; had reduced the adjacent islands of St. Martin and Saba, and, by means of a second squadron which he detached under Captain Reynolds, of the *Monarch*, in pursuit of another rich fleet, which had already put to sea, he had captured that also : and thus, within a few days of the commencement of hostilities, he almost annihilated the Dutch influence in those seas. Nor was the importance of the conquest to be measured solely by the injury it inflicted on the Dutch. Their previous neutrality had rendered St. Eustatia the storehouse of all the powers at enmity with us, and their unfriendliness towards us combined with their love of gain in inducing them to connive at its becoming such. There was little doubt that, of the vast stores seized by Rodney on this occasion, by far the greater part belonged to merchants who had no connection with Holland ; that, indeed, a very large portion was the property of British traders, who were thus carrying on a secret commerce with the colonies which had revolted from, and were warring against their own country. However impolitic and unjust our treatment

of our North American colonies may have been, no language of reprobation or contempt can be strong enough for those Englishmen who, when the war was begun, sought their own private advantage by assisting those colonies ; but to this shameful traffic Rodney had now given a death-blow, though the legal troubles in which (from the fact of so much of the property in St. Eustatia belonging to British owners) his zeal involved him, prevented him from sharing in his own person the full advantage of the exploits by which his country was so greatly benefited.

The fall of St. Eustatia drew after it that of Demerara and Essequibo, both of which settlements likewise surrendered at the first summons ; and Rodney was planning an expedition against Surinam and Curaçoa, when he was compelled to abandon that design by the intelligence which he received of the approach of a large French fleet from Europe. Its strength was not mentioned ; but, suspecting that its first destination must be Martinique, where Rear-Admiral Drake, with nine ships, was blockading a small squadron in Port Royal Bay, he detached Hood with nine more to take that officer under his command, reckoning that the two squadrons thus combined would be sufficient to counteract any enterprise which this new enemy might attempt. Hood himself would have preferred transferring the fleet to the eastward of Martinique, thinking such a movement would facilitate his bringing the French to battle as they approached : but the necessity of preventing the blockaded squadron from escaping to annoy our possessions in that quarter, and likewise the belief that the blockade was causing severe distress in Martinique, justly outweighed all other reasons in Rodney's mind ; and, accordingly, he adhered to his own opinion. On the 28th of April the French came in sight of our frigates, which were on the look-out, and they proved a more formidable force than either of the British admirals had anticipated. Twenty sail of the line, of far larger size than ours, with

one fifty-gun ship, and several frigates, had been placed under the command of the Comte de Grasse, who, of all the French officers, had at this time the highest reputation, and who now advanced with great confidence, believing with some reason, that he should find no force of ours able to resist him. In respect of our intentions to resist him, he was soon undeceived : for Hood at once formed his fleet into a compact line, and while making every exertion to get to windward of the new-comers, kept at the same time sufficiently close to Port Royal to prevent the ships within from escaping, and the others from entering during the darkness ; and the next morning, by which time they had approached within four miles of his station, he formed in a close line of battle, and stood towards them. De Grasse followed his example, advancing also in a compact line of battle, and presently, while still at a great distance, opened his fire. Hood made no reply till he saw the French shot pass over our ships, and then he also began a cannonade ; still, however, directing his chief exertions to the object of bringing the French to close quarters. For as soon as De Grasse perceived that we were not daunted by his superiority of force, he altered his tactics, tacking to preserve the distance between us. That superiority was by this time increased by the movement of the ships in Port Royal Bay, who when they perceived that our attention was diverted from them, weighed anchor, and, standing out to sea, were soon in a condition to take part in the action. But even this advantage did not dispose the French Admiral to a closer conflict. He perceived that our ships were better handled than his own, and that our fire was more rapid ; but he perceived also that his guns were of a heavier calibre, and could do execution at a greater distance, and he resolved to be content with such advantage as these circumstances would give him. In a short time he desisted from even the distant cannonade, and, availing himself of the weather-gage of which Hood had been unable



to deprive him, he hauled off altogether, and defied all the efforts of his antagonist to make him continue the action.

Indeed Hood was in no condition to persevere in those efforts long, for, though in men he had inflicted on the enemy a greater loss than he had sustained, some of his ships had received very extensive damage. He devoted that afternoon to repairing them, despatching the *Russell*, which was the most injured of all, to Rodney, with intelligence of what had taken place ; and the next morning he again approached the French fleet, resolved, though now more inferior than before, to make one more attempt to bring on a decisive battle. He had now but seventeen ships, and De Grasse had twenty-six : and at first it seemed, as it had seemed the day before, that the Frenchman was equally willing to fight ; indeed his first movements indicated an intention on his part to become the assailant, by falling on the British rear and crushing that with his whole force. To prevent this, Hood promptly drew his fleet close together, forming it into a line of battle, sometimes ahead and sometimes abreast, as the frequent shifting of the wind dictated. Soon after mid-day the wind changed to the south-east, and he instantly made sail to windward, hoping thus to gain the weather-gage, which would have enabled him to force De Grasse to battle. But presently the breeze wholly died away, and, beyond a repetition of the distant cannonade of the preceding day, nothing could be done : and this day's action had further crippled some more of his ships, so that, as evening came on, he found himself compelled to abandon all further attempts to bring on a battle with so superior a force, and sailed to Antigua to refit.

The *Russell* reached St. Eustatia on the 4th of May, and Rodney, leaving the main body of his fleet there, without loss of time proceeded with the *Sandwich* and *Triumph* to join Hood, resolving to attack De Grasse wherever he should find him. He reached his gallant

lieutenant between Montserrat and Antigua, and hearing that the French fleet was now threatening Sainte Lucie he sent forward a fast-sailing vessel to announce his approach. De Grasse retreated, abandoned his attempt on that island, and again baffled every endeavour to bring him to action : and Rodney, pleased, indeed, to have saved so important a possession by the mere terror of his name, but chagrined at the enemy's success in avoiding a battle, retired to Barbadoes. He was at this time in very bad health, and had, some months before, been forced on that account to apply for a short leave to return to England, Lord Sandwich, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who, whatever may have been his faults in other respects, deserves high credit for his penetration in selecting good officers, his firmness in supporting them, and his discretion in leaving their operations very much to their own judgment, while granting the permission requested, pressed him at the same to forbear from availing himself of it as long as he could, urging upon him that the war could not last much longer, and that the honour of closing it in that quarter belonged to himself. And Rodney, in reply, assured him that he would not quit his command as long as he had strength to perform its duties ; but by July he got so much worse that he was compelled to relinquish them, and, as the Sandwich was too much out of repair for the voyage across the Atlantic, he shifted his flag to the Spanish flagship which he had captured in the preceding year, and whose name had been changed from the Phoenix to the Gibraltar, and returned to winter in England, leaving Hood in command.

During the heat of the summer the scene of action was changed to the North American coast, which, indeed, even in the earlier part of the year, had witnessed some operations of magnitude and importance. In February we had a small fleet of ten sail of the line, under Admirals Arbuthnot and Graves, in Gardiner's Bay, and the

French had one of almost equal strength further to the north in Newport Harbour, under the command of the Comte de Barras. Washington was very eager to induce Barras to move to the south, to assist his operations in Virginia; but he could not prevail till the Frenchman heard that Arbuthnot, who had sailed from Gardiner's Bay, had encountered a violent storm, which had wholly disabled two of his ships, had greatly injured the rest, and had compelled him to put back to refit. When, however, the intelligence of this disaster reached him, Barras complied with the request of the American Commander-in-chief, and at the beginning of March quitted Rhode Island, and bore down towards the Chesapeake. On the 10th Arbuthnot, hearing of his movements, pursued him, and, after a few days' chase, overtook him just as he was on the point of entering the harbour. The two fleets were exactly equal, each consisting of eight sail of the line: and the Frenchman did not decline the combat to which the Englishman invited him. Arbuthnot attacked him with great spirit, and in little more than an hour had thrown his whole line into confusion, and had every prospect of gaining a decisive victory. But the enemy fought hard and manœuvred well; better, indeed, than he did, for he appears to have lost time through his anxiety to make his squadron preserve a symmetrical order; and while with this object he was occupying the fleet in manœuvres and counter-manœuvres, a fog came on, under cover of which the French retreated and saved themselves.

In July Arbuthnot returned home, and Admiral Graves succeeded to the command. At first he missed one or two opportunities of distinguishing himself, for want of accurate information as to the movements of the enemy. Rodney, before he quitted the West Indies, had despatched a fast-sailing vessel to his squadron with intelligence of the events that had taken place there, of the plans of the West Indian fleet, and of the presumed objects and intentions

of the French ; and, soon after he assumed the command, Hood had despatched another on a similar errand. But both these vessels were captured on their way, and thus, as Graves was left to cruise about without any particular object, his exertions for some time were without any result. But Rodney, before he returned home, had directed Hood to proceed to the American coast, and at the end of August that officer joined Graves at Sandy Hook. Their combined squadrons now formed a fleet of nineteen sail of the line ; and, though many of the ships were in a very poor condition, they at once sailed southward in quest of the French, hoping by this movement to assist the operations of the army under Lord Cornwallis ; and on the 5th of September they fell in with De Grasse at the mouth of the Chesapeake. His fleet consisted of twenty-four sail of the line, and in every respect his superiority was very great. His own flagship, the *Ville de Paris*, mounted one hundred and ten guns, and was reckoned by the French the finest ship in the world. His entire force outnumbered ours by five ships, by above four hundred guns, and by nearly seven thousand men. But, in spite of these considerations, Graves did not hesitate to attack them. When they were first seen they were on the larboard tack, and he at once drew up his fleet in a line nearly parallel to theirs on the opposite tack. But presently he wore all his ships together, thus bringing them on the same tack with the enemy. Admiral Drake's division led the van, Hood's was in the rear. Eager not only to fight, but to fight as speedily as possible, since the French fleet was more scattered than his own, Graves now formed a compact line of battle ahead, and bore down to close quarters with them, and a little after four in the afternoon he opened his fire on their leading ships. The action soon became warm and pretty general, two-thirds of each fleet being closely engaged : and, though at one time one or two of our ships, through the excessive eagerness of their cap-



tains, crowded each other, and threatened to throw our line into confusion, the Admiral by his skill and readiness quickly restored order, and, keeping up the signal for close fighting, pressed the enemy with great resolution and effect. In little more than an hour it became evident that the French had had enough. De Grasse, with his centre division, began to draw off; and when he had increased his distance from our centre so far as to receive but little injury from our continued fire, he signalled to his van to retreat also. They obeyed, setting all sail: the rear had hardly been engaged at all. For a short time Graves did his best to continue the action, but, as evening was closing in, he presently relinquished the attempt, and rather directed all his attention to keeping close to the enemy during the night, so as to renew the engagement at daybreak. But he presently learnt that seven of his ships were so greatly disabled as to render it impossible for them to bear a part in any further engagement: and he rightly judged that to attack twenty-four ships with twelve would be not bravery, but rashness. Even then, however, he would make no movement to decline a battle, but lay in front of the French for three days; and on the fourth, a wind fair for their purpose springing up, they hoisted all sail, and retreated to the entrance of the Chesapeake. They owned a loss of seven hundred men, while ours did not amount to half that number; but, from their practice of directing their chief fire at our masts and rigging, our ships were far more crippled than theirs. In all the engagements which during this war took place between the hostile fleets, the tactics of the French were the same. Whatever might be their superiority of number, with the feeling attributed by the Romans to the Carthaginians of old, they considered it a sufficient triumph to escape from us, comforting themselves for the humiliation which they could hardly disguise even from themselves, by gasconading accounts of the great injuries they had inflicted on us, and of the still greater

damage they would have done to us had we not fled before them. On the present occasion they published a statement which, besides estimating our loss at eight hundred men (it was really two hundred and thirty-six), was not even consistent with itself: it admitted that Graves had been the assailant, and had borne down on them, yet, in a subsequent paragraph, it charged him with keeping at such a distance that their Admiral could hardly bring him to action. And, while it attributed De Grasse's failure to renew the engagement to the success of Graves's manœuvres, it confessed that on the 7th, at least, the French had the advantage of the wind, which of course gave them the option of fighting or not : as again on the 9th, when they took advantage of it to sail away altogether.

At the entrance to the Chesapeake, De Grasse was joined by the fleet from Rhode Island, which M. de Barras had brought down a few days before, surprising and capturing one or two of our frigates on his way ; and in the course of the next few weeks Graves was also reinforced by five sail of the line. But De Grasse, who had now thirty-two sail under his orders, was too strong for us to venture to attack him ; and towards the end of the autumn the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his army, at Yorktown, virtually terminated the contest in that part of America.

In Europe the war, as far as the navies of France and Spain were concerned, led to no transactions of moment. During the summer of 1780, Admiral Geary, with the Channel fleet of twenty-four sail of the line, cruised up and down the Bay of Biscay, effectually confining to its harbour the French fleet in Brest, which did not amount to above two-thirds of his numbers : but the next year, when Admiral Kempenfelt had but twelve ships in those waters, the enemy came out under M. de Guichen, and the British Commander judged him to be too strong for him to attack with the slightest prospect of success. He did, indeed, cut off a number of transports and merchant-

men, which De Guichen was escorting across the Atlantic, and contented himself with this success, without imperilling it by an encounter with a force above half as strong again as his own: and Admiral Darby relieved and re-victualled Gibraltar without opposition. The only battle which took place in the European seas, during the whole year, was one between an English and Dutch squadron of equal size, on the 9th of August. Admiral Parker, with seven sail of the line and one or two frigates, was convoying a very valuable flotilla of merchantmen to the Baltic, when off the western extremity of the Dogger Bank, he fell in with the Dutch Admiral Zoutman, who, with exactly the same number of ships, was likewise proceeding towards the north on a similar errand. Both commanders were equally desirous to engage, and a battle ensued that, in the fury with which it was maintained, resembled those which above a century before had so often crippled the resources of both nations. At last, after fighting for nearly four hours at very close quarters, the Dutch retreated greatly damaged, while the British were in no condition to pursue them. The injuries, however, which Parker had received, he repaired in a few hours; but one of the Dutch ships, the *Hollandia*, 64, was beyond the aid of the carpenter, and went down in the course of the evening. The flag from her masthead was the only trophy that the conqueror had to show; but the King, who was especially delighted with the circumstances of the action, paid him as conspicuous a compliment as if he had brought home the whole of the Dutch fleet, proceeding down the Thames in the royal yacht to meet him on his return, going on board the *Fortitude*, his flagship, and causing all the captains of the different ships to be formally presented to him on her quarterdeck.

Both sides felt that the war was drawing near its close, and both sides made the greater efforts to strike some

important blow, which might give them a decisive advantage in the negotiations for its conclusion. The French, as we have already mentioned, in the winter of 1781 despatched M. de Guichen with a powerful reinforcement for De Grasse; and we, on our part, gave Rodney, whose health was in some degree re-established, and who was eager to return to resume his command, a squadron of twelve ships in good condition to add to the force which he had left in the West Indies. At the end of 1781, Hood had returned to the West Indian station, where his squadron was from time to time reinforced, till it amounted to twenty sail of the line. And before Rodney arrived at Barbadoes, which he did not reach till the 19th of February, Hood had already had one brush with the enemy, under circumstances that reflected the greatest credit on his courage and seamanship. De Grasse had twenty-nine ships of the line with him; but when Hood heard, in spite of his great inferiority of force, that the French fleet had sailed to attack St. Christopher's, he likewise hastened thither, determined to make an effort to preserve that important island. With odds of three to two in his favour, the Frenchman, the moment the British came in sight, sailed forth to encounter them in the open sea; when Hood by a series of masterly manœuvres worked round him so completely as to occupy the anchorage which he had just quitted, and thus to place his fleet between the island and the enemy which was threatening it. Greatly nettled, De Grasse the two following days made furious attacks on Hood, thinking to crush him by his overwhelming numbers, but each time he was repulsed with heavy loss. But the advantage thus gained, however creditable to the fleet, could not save the island; since, before Hood's arrival, the Marquis de Bouillé had effected a landing on it with a force greatly superior to the garrison, and pressed the siege with a vigour that soon made all resistance impossible; nor could Hood prevent him



from following up this success by the reduction of Nevis and Montserrat, while another force recovered Demerara and Essequibo; so that, when Rodney arrived, Barbadoes, Jamaica, Sainte Lucie, and Antigua were, of all our settlements and acquisitions, the only possessions remaining to us in those seas.

It was then at no favorable time that Rodney resumed his command: when he sailed, Lord Sandwich did not hesitate to affirm that "the fate of the empire was in his hands;"\* and neither the First Lord nor the Admiral anticipated the reverses which were thus to befall us while he was crossing the Atlantic. Happily, Rodney had too high a spirit to be dismayed at disaster, or to fear responsibility: on the contrary, his courage rose with his difficulties, and he only felt that the greater they were, the greater necessity there was for surmounting them. Within a day or two of his arrival at Barbadoes, he received a further reinforcement of two sail of the line; and as Hood also joined him, he had now a fleet of thirty-six sail, and did not scruple to affirm that he was in a condition "to put a stop to the enemy's conquests."† Had he failed to make his words good, they would have been remembered against him to his prejudice; for, at the end of March, his friend Lord Sandwich, with the rest of Lord North's ministry, had quitted office, and the new head of the Admiralty in Lord Rockingham's administration was Keppel, who, although in many respects an energetic and judicious minister, apparently had either a personal grudge against Rodney, or was under the influence of others who cherished such feelings. One of his first measures was to recall Rodney; but, fortunately before the message could reach the West Indies, the Admiral had justified not only

\* See Lord Sandwich's Letter to Rodney, Jan. 2nd, in Mundy's 'Life of Rodney,' vol. ii.

† Rodney's Letter to Sir Peter Parker, March 5th, &c., &c., *ibid.*

his own confident language, but the warmest panegyrics and most sanguine prophecies of his friends.

The moment that Hood joined him, he made all sail for Martinique, in the hope of arriving there before De Grasse, but in that hope he was disappointed. The French were already safe in Port Royal Bay, and there they remained for some weeks; Rodney himself withdrew to Sainte Lucie, to give his personal superintendence to the collection of stores of all kinds, of which his entire fleet was greatly in want; but he left Hood and Drake with their respective divisions to keep watch at different points, so as to prevent De Grasse from quitting the harbour without being perceived, and also to hinder any reinforcement, whether of squadrons, single ships, or store vessels from reaching him. His vigilance was great, and no part of it was thrown away. It soon appeared that a large Spanish force was at Cape François in St. Domingo, and that De Grasse's instructions enjoined him to unite with his allies; and then, with the combined fleets, to sail against Jamaica, which it was expected, even if it did not capitulate at the first summons, must at all events be reduced in a very few days. The enterprise had been ably designed, but it had not been kept so secret but that Rodney had either precise information or a shrewd suspicion of the enemy's objects. By a chain of frigates skilfully posted, he kept up a constant communication with the divisions of Hood and Drake, and also received daily intelligence of the position and movements of the French. He had been forced to send home one or two of his ships for repairs, but they had been replaced by an equal number of new ones, and the whole force within his reach amounted to thirty-seven sail of the line, when on the 8th of April, the frigates signalled that the enemy's fleet was putting to sea. He collected his own and pursued them with such promptitude that the next morning he overtook them off the island of Dominica. As he pressed on, and got under the island, the wind died away; and

nearly half his fleet was completely becalmed, and for a time was separated from the other half. De Grasse saw his advantage, but had not the heart to avail himself of it to its full extent; he turned indeed upon Rodney, attacking his van with a heavy fire, but he would not venture to come to close quarters, and the distance at which he kept prevented his cannonade from being very destructive. By great exertions the hindmost ships of our fleet gradually came up, and then De Grasse quitted us, and proceeded on his way, while Rodney lay to, partly to repair the slight damages that one or two of his ships had received in the skirmish and partly to lull De Grasse into a false confidence, by leading him to think the fleet more crippled than it really was. On the 10th the two fleets manœuvred in sight of one another, without anything occurring to give either an advantage, though it was perceived that one or two of the French ships were making signals of distress; and on the 11th two of them were at such a distance from the main body, that Rodney conceived hopes of cutting them off, and made the signal for a general chase to windward; thinking that, if he failed in cutting off those ships, the line which he was taking, coupled with the course to which De Grasse would be compelled in order to save them, would give him the weather-gage, and enable him to force the French to battle before they could possibly effect the desired junction with the Spaniards. He failed in his secondary object; he succeeded fully in his more important one. De Grasse united his crippled ships to his main body; but, when day broke on the 12th, Rodney had gained the wind of his antagonist and with it the power of bringing him to instant action.

The moment that it was light enough for his signals to be seen, Rodney attacked; and at seven o'clock the battle began. It is marked by several features which give it a peculiar distinction. It was on the largest scale of all modern sea-fights; the British fleet consisted of thirty-six

sail of the line,\* the French of thirty-four; but our numerical superiority was more than counterbalanced by the superior size of the French ships, which made their force, even in the estimation of De Grasse himself, the more powerful of the two;† and besides the crews, the French fleet had on board an army of five thousand five hundred men, with a complete train of battering-cannon and field-artillery, intended for their conquest of Jamaica. It lasted longer than any battle which ever took place between the two nations, being kept up without intermission for nearly twelve hours. In the eyes of the professional seaman it is still more remarkable, as affording the first modern instance of the successful execution of a manœuvre which, though practised more than once in former times, as we have seen in the battles under the Commonwealth, had, since that age, fallen into such complete disuse that now, on its re-adoption, it was generally looked upon as a new idea, and the honour of having suggested it was eagerly contended for.

Happily, on this day, Rodney had no occasion to com-

\* The following is a list of the British fleet:—

90	{	Formidable	Sir G. Rodney	74	{	Magnificent	Capt. Linzee
			Capt. Sir C. Douglas			Centaur ...	— Inglefield
	{	Barfleur ...	— Ld. Cranstown		Warrior ...	— Wallace	
			V.-Ad. Sir S. Hood		Arrogant ...	— Cornish	
			Capt. Knight		Marlborough	— Penny	
70	{	Prince George	— Williams	Monarch ...	— Reynolds		
		Duke ...	— Gardner	Valiant ...	— Goodall		
		Namur ...	— Fanshawe	Montague	— Bowen		
		Princessa	R.-Ad. Drake	Alfred ...	— Bayne		
74	{	Aleide ...	Capt. Knatchwell	Royal Oak	— Burnet		
			— Thompson	Yarmouth	Capt. Parry		
			Conqueror	— Balfour	Belliqueux	— Sutherland	
			Torbay ...	— Godwin	Prince William	— Wilkinson	
			Fame ...	— Barber	Repulse ...	— Dumaresq	
			Russell ...	— Saumarez	St. Albans	— Inglis	
			Hercules ...	— Savage	Agamemnon	— Caldwell	
			Resolution	— Ld. R. Manners	Prothée ...	— Buckner	
			Canada	Cap. Hn. W. Cornwallis	Anson ...	— Blair	
			Ajax ...	Capt. Charrington	Nonsuch ...	— Truscott	
74	{	Bedford ...	— Affleck Graves	America ...	— Thompson		

† “Comte de Grasse, who is at this moment sitting in my stern-gallery, tells me that he thought his fleet superior to mine; and does so still, though I had two more in number. And I am of his opinion, as his was composed all of large ships, and ten of mine only sixty-fours.”—Letter of Lord Rodney to his wife, ‘Life,’ vol. ii., p. 252.



plain of want of support; on the contrary, every captain seemed to be animated with the same spirit as himself, and the moment the signal for action was made, the whole fleet bore down in a compact line of battle, each ship ranging up close to an antagonist, and thus in a very short time the fight became general. For some hours it raged with great fury; the two fleets lying in parallel lines, and keeping up a ceaseless fire, the smoke of which, as there was hardly any wind, hung so heavily over the combatants that it was impossible to see what was going on at any distance; but about noon the breeze freshened, and at the same time shifted some points, and, as the smoke then in some degree cleared off, Rodney found himself in a position to execute a manœuvre, which he had conceived long before, as offering the most effectual means of making an action decisive. The French line by this time had become more disordered than our own, and near the centre there was a slight opening. Rodney's flagship was the *Formidable*, and to use his own expression, she now "proved herself worthy of her name." For this opening she steered with every sail set; the *Namur*, the *Duke*, the *Canada*, came close after her: the whole of the centre division followed: the enemy's line was pierced and irretrievably broken, and Rodney crowned the operation by causing the ships that had thus passed through the French line to wear all together, thus doubling on the French division which they had cut off, and placing it between two fires. Still, even against this disadvantage, the French long struggled with undaunted valour; displaying not only their wonted brilliant vivacity of courage at the outset of the contest, but, what they were less famous for, a stubborn resolution more akin to the British character than to their own. The *Cæsar*, 74, was attacked first by the *Centaur* of the same force, under Captain Inglefield, and presently by three more ships; her captain nailed his colours to the mast, and it was not till he was killed, and the mast had gone

overboard, that she surrendered, a perfect wreck. The *Glorieux* did not strike till her masts and bowsprit had been shot away, and till she was perfectly unmanageable. Rodney had destined De Grasse's own ship, the *Ville de Paris*, for his own antagonist; but in this, and in this alone, he was disappointed. In the action of the 9th, when abreast of her at three miles' distance, he had backed his maintopsail as a challenge to her; but on that day she had refused every challenge, and in fact never fired a shot. To-day her conduct was different, no ship fought with more desperate gallantry; at first it seemed as if De Grasse hoped to decide the battle single-handed by the great superiority of her armament; (she carried one hundred and ten guns of far larger calibre than any in the British fleet). When all hope of victory was gone, it appeared as if he was resolved at least to gain the honour of being the last to yield, and of yielding only to an admiral; but the admiral was not fated to be Rodney himself. In vain Rodney pressed on towards him, sinking one of his antagonists, *Le Diadème*, 74, by a single broadside as she stood across his path; but fresh foes interposed, with whom he was forced to content himself. Meanwhile the *Canada*, after a fierce conflict, had already taken the *Hector*, and attacked the *Ville de Paris*, who had beaten off more than one foe, not without receiving severe damage herself. The ships were terribly unequal in size: but the English guns were much better served, and when the two had been engaged in single combat for two hours, it became plain that all chance of escape for the French Admiral was gone. Then others of our ships came to the aid of the *Canada*: but still De Grasse fought on, and was seen on his quarterdeck manfully encouraging his men to hold out to the last. The sun was almost sinking when Hood in the *Barfleur* joined his assailants, pouring in a broadside which is said to have killed sixty men; and still De Grasse fought on, till at last, when besides himself

there were but two unwounded men left on his upper-deck, he struck his colours and surrendered.

This was the closing event of the day. Five ships had been taken, one of which, the *Cæsar*, took fire in the course of the night and was burnt; one had been sunk, and, a day or two afterwards, Hood, whom Rodney detached in pursuit of the crippled ships of the enemy, brought in two more sail of the line, a frigate, and a sloop. In addition to these prizes, it happened that the principal part of the land-force already mentioned, with the whole of the artillery and ammunition, was on board some of the captured ships, as well as a sum of money intended to defray the cost of the expedition against Jamaica.

The defeated fleet fled towards St. Domingo, and Rodney pondered anxiously on the propriety of pursuing them; but a consideration of the state of his own ships, many of which were of necessity severely crippled after so long and obstinate a battle, and also of the paramount importance of not allowing himself to be drawn away from the protection of the few islands still remaining to us, compelled him to decide against it: and he was forced to content himself with detaching Hood, as has already been mentioned, after the main body; and with sending Commodore Affleck with a small squadron to watch four of the stragglers, which, in a very shattered condition, had put into Curaçoa. He hoped, however, that he had not seen the last of the enemy himself, and, as soon as Hood rejoined him, he left that brilliant officer with the sound part of the fleet to proceed to Cape François, to watch the French who had taken shelter there, while he conducted his own crippled ships to Jamaica to refit, thinking that the repairs would be executed with greater rapidity under his own eye; and desiring not to lose a moment in getting the whole fleet into a condition to repeat the blow, which he had already given with such crushing effect. But Fortune conspired with his enemies to deprive him of the oppor-



tunity of so doing. Allusion has already been made to the troubles in which he was involved, by the circumstance of much of the property seized at St. Eustatia belonging, in fact, to British owners. They had brought actions at law, and had filled Parliament with their complaints, the justice or injustice of which was, as is too common, thus wrested into a mere party question. As Lord North's ministry defended the Admiral, the Opposition took up the cause of the Planters ; and when, through the changes that took place in the spring of the year, they came into office, one of their first acts, as we have already mentioned, was to recall Rodney, and to send out Admiral Pigot to supersede him. Pigot only sailed from Plymouth on this unfortunate errand, the very day after the news arrived of the great victory gained by the Admiral whom faction had thus attempted to disgrace, and an express was instantly sent to that port to stop his departure ; but it was too late. All the amends that it was in the power of the ministry to make was cheerfully made : Rodney was created a peer, with a pension on both the English and the Irish establishment, that on the English one being annexed to the title for ever ; and Hood, as second in command, was also rewarded with an Irish barony. It is mortifying to relate that Fortune also deprived the conquerors of such of the fruits of their victory as were in her power. Before he gave up his command, Rodney had despatched Admiral Graves to England with the six finest of his prizes, and three of his own ships that had suffered most in the battle ; but when they reached the middle of the Atlantic, a hurricane fell on them which, from the damage they had sustained, they were wholly unable to withstand. The *Ville de Paris*, the *Hector*, and the *Glorieux* went down with the whole of their crews ; the *Caton* was driven back in a hopeless state to the American coast : and of the glorious 12th of April, the *Jason* and the *Ardent* were the only trophies which reached England.



Even had Rodney remained in the West Indies, he might have been unable to add to his achievements, as Admiral Pigot did find himself unable to imitate them : for, in fact, the victory that had been gained had so far terminated the war in those regions, that the enemy would no longer put to sea in large fleets ; and the only remaining warlike deeds that were performed in the western seas were confined to actions between single vessels, which generally terminated in our favour ; but which, however creditable to our officers who were engaged, and however interesting at the time, are not of such enduring importance as to fix the attention of posterity.

In Europe, this, the last year of the war, passed off without any great battle, though not without great preparations for one, and a very imposing display of the naval resources of the kingdom. In the spring, a well-appointed fleet of twelve sail of the line was sent to cruise between the mouth of the Channel and the northern coast of Spain, under the command of Admiral Barrington in the *Britannia* ; but he found no enemy equal to encounter him, though he did fall in with a convoy of French merchantmen, under the protection of three line-of-battle ships. It is a remarkable proof of that inferiority of our ships to those of the French, to which allusion has been more than once made in this work, that, in the attempt to escape, the enemy outsailed the whole of our fleet with the exception of the *Foudroyant*, 74, Captain Jervis. She came up with the fugitives ; brought the rearmost of them, the *Pegase*, 74, to action, and captured her, an exploit for which Jervis, who was wounded, received the ribbon of the Bath : but the rest held on their way and escaped, not even a merchantman being overtaken. The disappointment, however, passed without notice, for in this quarter of the world the attention both of ourselves and of our enemies was almost wholly concentrated on the siege of Gibraltar, which had never been relaxed for a

moment. It has been related how, in April, 1780, Rodney relieved it after his defeat of Langara. In the same month of the succeeding year, when the garrison had again been reduced to the greatest possible distress short of actual starvation, Admiral Darby, with a fleet too powerful for the blockading squadron to resist, forced his way into the Bay with a convoy of a hundred storeships ; but by 1782, the supplies thus brought were again exhausted. Elliott and his indomitable soldiers were once more on the verge of famine, and it became a matter of notoriety that the Spaniards were preparing an attack of some new kind, and of more formidable magnitude than ever, to test the vaunted impregnability of the fortress. It was resolved by our Government in like manner to make greater exertions than ever not merely to give the garrison temporary relief, but to compel an entire abandonment of the siege ; and in September a splendid fleet sailed from Spithead under Lord Howe, to convoy a vast flotilla of storeships to Gibraltar, and likewise to fight the combined fleets which were covering the besieging force. Howe had already been despatched with a fleet of twenty-one sail of the line and a proportionate number of frigates, on one cruise in the course of the summer, to endeavour to bring to action a French and Spanish fleet which had quitted Cadiz at the beginning of June, and which was expected to be found off Brest ; and he had fallen in with it off Ushant, but, as it amounted to thirty-six sail of the line, he could not venture to attack it, rather thinking himself sufficiently successful in being able to prevent its attacking him, and in protecting from it two most valuable fleets of merchantmen which were hastening home from the East and West Indies. But the force collected for the relief of Gibraltar was of a far more imposing character ; and it gives us a favourable idea of the resources of the empire at this time, and of the steady and judicious attention which had been paid to our navy, to find that, at the very moment when

such a splendid fleet was with Rodney in the West Indies, and while other squadrons were protecting our interests or threatening our enemies on the American, African, and Indian coasts, we could still give Howe a force equal to Rodney's, without denuding our own shores of their necessary defences. Thirty-six sail of the line, eight frigates, and several fireships were placed under his command. The preparations for this expedition were marked by one great disaster. At the end of August he was pressing on the equipment of his fleet with all possible speed, when he lost the finest ship of the whole number by an accident, which, owing perhaps some portion of its long-enduring notoriety to its singularity, is not yet forgotten. Among the subordinate commanders was Admiral Kempenfelt, whose flag was hoisted in the *Royal George*, a noble three-decker of one hundred and eight guns, and generally extolled as the finest ship in the British navy. While she was lying at Spithead it was ascertained that one of the pipes in her bottom stood in need of some slight repair, so trifling, indeed, that it was thought it could be effected without taking her into dock; and accordingly, on the 29th of August, the ship was heeled over a little on one side to get at the damaged part; the weather was calm, the water smooth as glass, the Admiral was writing in his cabin, the crew, with great numbers of their wives and children (who had been allowed to come on board while the vessel was thus preparing for her departure), were between decks, paying no especial attention to the carpenters' work, which had nothing difficult or unusual about it, when, in a moment, the great ship went to the bottom with almost every soul in her. It appeared that the ship had been heeled over a little too much, and that a sudden squall of wind had thrown her over so much more that the water entered her lower gun-ports which were all open, filled her and sank her. So absolutely instantaneous was her plunge, that, except the watch and a



few who happened to be on the upper-deck, scarcely one human being was saved. The number lost, though never exactly known, was believed to amount to nearly a thousand persons. And the mighty ship which had carried Boscawen into the thickest of the fight with De la Clue, and had borne the triumphant flag of Hawke in the proudest of his victories, long obstructed the anchorage at Spithead, till, in the present generation, the skill of the engineer has cleared away the obstacle, and left the time-honoured roadstead as unencumbered and safe as before it was choked up by the wreck of our own noble ship and the corpses of our own gallant seamen.

Sorrowful at, but not discouraged by, this great calamity; Howe hastened on the equipment of his fleet. He had still under his command many an officer worthy of his highest confidence: indeed it is remarkable that, with the single exception of Nelson, all those officers who illustrated the British flag by their victories in the first war against revolutionary France, bore commissions in this fleet. Hotham, with the rank of Commodore, had his broad pendant in the *Edgar*; Rear-Admiral Alexander Hood, subsequently known as Lord Bridport, hoisted his flag in the *Queen*; Jervis was Captain of the *Foudroyant*; Duncan of the *Blenheim*; Hyde Parker, who at Copenhagen had Nelson under his orders, commanded the *Goliah*, and, though Nelson himself was not there, Howe's own flag was flying in the *Victory*, the ship which has been immortalised by his last triumph and his glorious death. Early in September Howe set sail; but the wind was almost dead foul for the greater part of his voyage, and, before he arrived at Gibraltar, the grand attack, so long projected, so laboriously and skilfully prepared, and so confidently boasted of, had utterly failed. It does not belong to the present work to relate in detail the final triumph of the heroic garrison, the tremendous cannonade and bombardment with which the enemy assailed them



from their fancied fire-proof batteries, nor the still more terrible fire with which the fortress defied, replied to, and at last destroyed the beseigers ; nor the gallant humanity of the victorious garrison, eager, at the risk of their own lives, to save their scorched and drowning enemies. But though the more active efforts of the besiegers were thus defeated, they still maintained the blockade as closely and vigorously as ever ; and it required the knowledge of Howe's being actually on his way to relieve them, to enable the garrison still to bear up against the cruel sufferings which had almost worn out their health and strength ; everything, in short, but their indomitable courage and deep sense of duty to their country. At last, on the morning of the 11th of October, the British fleet was seen from the top of the rock, and while Howe formed the ships of war into a compact line of battle ahead, he sent forward the storeships under the convoy of a single frigate ; and though some of them, being baffled by the currents, shot by the bay into the Mediterranean, and so failed to reach the anchorage that evening, others did reach it, and began to land their supplies ; and from that hour the siege was virtually over.

Howe was greatly surprised at meeting with no resistance from the blockading force, but he presently learnt that, on the night preceding his arrival, a heavy gale had driven the combined fleets of France and Spain from their station, forcing some far to the eastward, and wrecking others on the adjacent rugged shore. On the 11th they were all in Algeiras Bay, busy in repairing damages ; but on the morning of the 13th, having entirely refitted, they stood out to sea, in the hope of still intercepting that portion of the British convoy (and it was no small one) that had not yet made its way back to the fortress. That day Howe himself was within the Straits, having followed the ships which had missed the bay in order to protect them ; and, as soon as the enemy was seen, he a second

time formed in line of battle, expecting to be immediately attacked. They had great temptation to attack him, since they considerably outnumbered him. The necessity of detaching some of his vessels to secure his convoy from their frigates had reduced his force available for a battle to thirty-two sail of the line; while they, after deducting the ships disabled by the storm of the 10th, had still forty-two sail, many of which far exceeded the largest of ours in size. The Santissima Trinidad, of a hundred and twenty guns, was the largest ship in the world; five more carried one hundred and ten guns each, and they were all in good condition. However, they kept at a distance that night, and the next morning, the wind shifting to the eastward, Howe took instant advantage of the change to send the storeships into Gibraltar, which they all reached in safety in a few hours. On the 14th two ships of the line, which on the 10th had been driven into the Mediterranean, rejoined the enemy's fleet, and increased its number to forty-four. But still they kept aloof, contented to observe Howe's operations without attempting to impede them, while he, after the whole of the supplies had been landed, leisurely disembarked two regiments which he had brought out as a reinforcement for the garrison, and fifteen hundred barrels of gunpowder. This work was not completed till the 18th; and then, as there was no longer any object to be gained by his continuance within the Straits; and as, if a battle were to be fought, the open sea would be more favourable for the manœuvres to which he must trust to enable him to counterbalance the superiority of the enemy, he repassed the Straits, and once more formed a line of battle off Cape Spartel. For mere shame the enemy were obliged to follow him, and on the morning of the 20th the two fleets were again face to face. But the enemy had the wind, and therefore had it in their power to bring on or to avoid an action. It was soon seen that they had decided to avoid it. They did, indeed, for a short time

try the effect of a distant cannonade ; and on one occasion, when in the process of some manœuvres, three of our ships fell astern of the rest, they made a demonstration as if they would have cut them off: but the three ships made a vigorous defence, and those of their comrades who were nearest bore down to their support; on which the assailants drew off, and the next day the whole combined fleet retreated to Cadiz. Howe, according to his orders, detached Sir Richard Hughes with a squadron to the West Indies, and with the rest of his fleet he returned home.

Howe was blamed in some quarters for not endeavouring to force the enemy to a more decisive action ; and it can hardly be denied that the complaint was not altogether without foundation. Indeed the defence which his most ingenious apologist is reduced to make for him proves the case against him ; since, to establish it, he is compelled to argue that “ to pursue the enemy neither was nor ought to have been any part of his object,” and that “ the measure of mere fighting without any adequate object in view can never be adopted by any wise commander either by sea or land.”\* But in this respect it is evident that operations by land and sea wholly differ from each other. The circumstances of a military campaign depend so greatly on the features of the country in which it is carried on, on the rivers, defiles, mountains, and other natural obstacles to the advance or retreat of troops, that a skill in turning them to account may often give a general advantages equal to those which he could obtain from the bloodiest battle, or the most complete victory. Posts may be surprised, positions may be turned, towns, and even armies, may be hemmed in so as to be forced to surrender without firing a shot; but no such circumstances assist or embarrass a naval commander. In this field of action there are neither mountains nor defiles, there are no posts to be held, no positions to be made good, or to be rendered useless ; there

\* Campbell's ‘Lives of the Admirals;’ vol. vi. p. 68; ed. 1818;



is no opportunity for skill or for manœuvres till the rival fleets come to actual conflict. And, accordingly, naval commissions enjoin the holders of them to do their utmost to take, burn, sink, or destroy, the ships of the enemy, as the sole mode of bringing a naval campaign to a glorious termination. Howe was now nearly sixty years old, and it may be that increasing years had already somewhat cooled his earlier fire: but, whatever may have been the cause, while we allow him on this occasion to have shown himself skilful and prudent, we can hardly give him the praise of a bold and enterprising commander. We cannot deny that he might have done more. Nay, looking at the events on the other side of the Atlantic, we can hardly doubt that Rodney or Hood would have done more. It may be that, with the advantage of the wind possessed by the enemy, and with their proximity to the Spanish ports, no endeavour to bring them to action would have been successful: but the greater the probability of failing in the attempt, the more clear is the obligation to have made it. The enemy by seeking to avoid an engagement were making the strongest practical admission of their inferiority; and we should have at least shown an equal conviction of it by displaying as great a desire to fight as they showed to avoid fighting.

Though the operations were not on so magnificent a scale, nor the results of such importance as those in the West Indies, some of the hardest fighting in the whole war took place in the Indian seas, where the outbreak of hostilities with the Dutch supplied our warriors with an additional inducement to exertion, in the rich prizes which the Eastern settlements of that wealthy republic appeared to offer. Among these, its situation rendered the Cape of Good Hope a possession of great importance, and, at the beginning of 1781, our Government projected an attack upon it, and committed it to Commodore Johnstone, with a squadron of ten sail of the line, three fifty-gun ships,



three frigates, and a small land-force under General Meadows. Johnstone was an officer of great courage and skill, and, had he had the Dutch alone to encounter, would probably have executed the enterprise entrusted to him with entire success; but at this time the French had a very skilful spy in London,\* who sent full information to Paris of the force and destination of the expedition; and, in consequence, a more powerful squadron than his was fitted out at Brest to defeat its objects, and the command was given to Admiral de Suffrein, than whom the French navy has had no more skilful or gallant seaman. The two squadrons were ready for sea at nearly the same time. Johnstone sailed from Spithead on the 13th of March, and on the 22nd, only nine days after, Suffrein quitted Brest to pursue him. The British Commodore, according to his orders, had put into Port Praya, in the Cape de Verd Islands to reprovision his ships, and was lying there engaged in this task, and utterly unsuspecting of danger, when on April 16, a squadron of five sail of the line, and several smaller vessels, was seen in the distance, which was soon discovered to be French, and which, in effect, was the force under Suffrein. The Cape de Verd Islands, as belonging to the Portuguese, were neutral ground; but Johnstone rightly conjectured that, with the prospect of success which his superiority afforded him, the French Admiral would pay but little respect to the neutrality, and without loss of time prepared for his defence. He had need of all his promptitude and energy, for, when the enemy were first discovered, full fifteen hundred of his men were ashore, as well as himself; but, before Suffrein could come near enough to begin his attack, he had collected them all on board, and had ranged his ships in the best manner his situation would admit, posting his largest vessels in front, and stationing even some armed

\* A man of the name of De la Mothe, who was afterwards detected and hanged.

merchantmen, which he was convoying, in such a position as to enable them to take an effective share in the conflict. At eleven o'clock Suffrein led into the bay and attacked our squadron with great vigour; but he was met by a gallantry equal to his own. The British ships fired with a rapidity and precision that the French could never rival, and the merchantmen were encouraged by their example, and showed themselves worthy of fighting by their side. The sole advantage obtained by the enemy was the capture of the Hinchinbrooke East Indiaman, which, however, was retaken the next day; while, to counter-balance her capture, we inflicted on the French squadron a loss of men which, by their own confession, trebled our own, and reduced the Hannibal, 50, to a state little better than a wreck. After two hours of fierce conflict the Frenchman retreated, and Johnstone at first prepared to pursue him; but one of his ships, the Isis, 50, Captain Sutton, was so crippled in her rigging and masts, as to be unable to obey his signals. While he was waiting for her the precious moments slipped by; and as the Commodore was also anxious for the safety of the convoy which he was escorting, and which was of great value, he, therefore, while he determined to proceed to the Cape, decided also to advance at no greater speed than the merchantmen could keep up with. Suffrein's pace likewise was delayed by the injuries which some of his ships had received in the action, and Johnstone was so little behind him, that the next day, as has been already mentioned, he retook the Hinchinbroke. He was so greatly annoyed at having been, as he considered, forced to let the enemy escape him, that he brought Captain Sutton to a court-martial; but that officer was honourably acquitted.

He was not long in obtaining some amends for his disappointment, though not so complete as he had hoped for. Proceeding on his course to the Cape, he captured

a Dutch East Indiaman with a valuable cargo, and heard from him that Suffrein had already reached the Cape, which, therefore, it was impossible for him to attack with the slightest prospect of success ; but at the same time he learnt that a squadron of five large Dutch vessels, laden with the richest produce of China and India, was lying in Saldanha Bay : thither, therefore, he at once determined to sail. The enemy were all well armed, each having from twenty to twenty-four guns. But he directed his operations against them with such prudence and rapidity that they were not able to escape out of the bay, nor had they time even to unload their cargoes. Their crews, when they saw the British entering the bay, and found that they could no longer escape, tried at least to baulk the victors of their prize by running the ships ashore, abandoning and setting fire to them. But our sailors were too quick for even the flames: they boarded the ships, extinguished the fire on all but one, and, as high-water floated them, towed them in triumph into the open sea. It being impossible to make any attempt on the Cape, since Suffrein would not quit it while he remained in sight, Johnstone divided his squadron, sending on three or four of them to reinforce Sir Edward Hughes in India, and returning with the rest to England.

Sir Edward Hughes, with a squadron of four sail of the line and three frigates, had been already carrying on the war with great energy, co-operating with the army in the reduction of Negapatam, Trincomalee, and Chinsurah, while a division from China reduced the principal Dutch establishments in Sumatra ; and now, when he was joined by the reinforcement which Johnstone forwarded to him from the Cape he found himself fully a match for Suffrein, who, having also been strengthened by a powerful reinforcement at the Mauritius, arrived in the Indian seas in the beginning of February, 1782. The French Admiral's plan was an ambitious one. It had been devised in con-



cert with Hyder Ali, the warlike Sultan of Mysore, who undertook to besiege Madras by land, while his European allies should blockade it by sea, and who neither doubted of the success of their combined operations against that important city, nor of their power to follow it up by the entire destruction of the British settlements along the Coromandel coast. The comparative weakness of Hughes's squadron was known to the allies, who were ignorant of the reinforcement which it had received, and which, indeed, was far from making it equal to the French in point of numbers : for their force amounted to ten sail of the line, a fifty-gun ship, and four frigates ; while the British Admiral had but eight sail of the line, a fifty-gun ship, and one frigate. Nevertheless Hughes, on hearing of his antagonist's approach, fearlessly awaited him in Madras Roads, making a skilful use of the interval afforded him to place his ships in the best position to receive the attack with which he was threatened. So formidable an appearance did he make, that, when Suffrein did come in sight he recoiled and retreated, and Hughes then, quitting his anchorage, chased him and brought him to action against his will. A series of events now took place resembling the operations of the two fleets of Pocock and D'Ache a quarter of a century before. In the course of less than a year and a half no fewer than five fierce battles took place between the two fleets in no one of which was any such decisive advantage obtained as the capture of a ship of war ; but in every one of which the honour of a barren victory remained with our commander, who, in point of force, was never superior, and was only once equal to his foe, and who in every instance compelled him to retreat with a loss far greater than that which he had inflicted. In the first action Hughes did, indeed, cut off five or six trading vessels and transports, one of which had three hundred troops on board, and a valuable cargo of military stores, and in the third he even claimed to have compelled



Le Severe, 64, to strike ; and the French appear to have admitted the truth of his assertion, though she succeeded in rejoining her comrades, and he was never able to take possession of her : but, as a set-off to these advantages, he was unable, while refitting his ships, to prevent Suffrein from taking Cuddalore and recovering Trincomalee. And, on the whole, the results of these battles, in which both sides displayed great courage, at the expense of vast numbers of brave and valuable lives, may be looked on as very evenly balanced.

The two fleets were preparing for a sixth battle when, in June, 1783, intelligence reached India that the preliminaries of peace had been agreed on between all the belligerent powers. A month or two later a definitive treaty was ratified, but the signature of the preliminary agreement terminated the war. The restoration of peace was hailed with an universal welcome. All the nations concerned in the war had been in a great degree exhausted by it. The principles on which national greatness is founded, and the absolute necessity of peace to the gradual and progressive increase of commercial prosperity were beginning to be understood and acknowledged, and England and France, the inevitable principals in the late and in every European war, were both resolved to put those principles in practice, and to cultivate that blessing. Probably no man in either kingdom foresaw that the seeds were already sown which, within a very few years would, for a time, sink the one nation into the lowest depths of misery ; would then again exalt her to the most imposing height of dominion and glory ; and would plunge both into the longest war that had ever divided them, the most sanguinary, costly, and lasting in its effects of all that are recorded in history.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1784—1794.

Nelson's vigilance in the West Indies—Expedition of the *Bounty*—Mutiny at Otaheite—Expedition of Captain Vancouver—Conduct of Spain at Nootka Sound—The Russian armament—War with France—Character of the war—The *Nymph* captures *La Cleopatre*—Lord Hood Commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean—He is received at Toulon—Action between the *Agamemnon* and the *Melpomene*—Evacuation of Toulon—Destruction of the French ships and arsenal—Affairs in Corsica—San Fiorenzo is taken—Nelson's exertions at Bastia—Misconduct of Generals Dundas and D'Aubant—Bastia is taken—Nelson's exertions at Calvi—It is taken—Lord Hood returns home—Admiral Hotham succeeds him—French fleet escapes from Gourjean Bay into Toulon—Inactive during the winter.

AFTER the events related in the last chapter, ten years passed in almost perfect tranquillity. In the Channel and the Mediterranean scarcely a ship of war was to be seen, and, though we had a small squadron in the West Indies, no officer but Nelson would ever have found an opportunity for distinction in the discharge of the apparently monotonous duties of such a station in time of peace. But he, with a genius which could discern every point in which the interests of his country were concerned, and an energy which thought no work by which those interests could be promoted foreign to his commission, now occupied himself in protecting our trade in those regions from the peaceful encroachments of the American merchants with a zeal as untiring as he had shown in securing it against warlike attacks; and the judgment which he displayed in this arduous task was so conspicuous that, though in following its dictates, he not only opposed the authority of the military governor of the Leeward Islands, but disobeyed the express orders of the admiral under whose command he was, he ultimately brought them both to acknowledge the superior correctness of his views, and to thank him for the firmness with which he had maintained

them. By his courage and wisdom in these transactions, and by his vigilant detection and fearless exposure of many corruptions and abuses which had long existed in different departments of the service in the West Indies, he had done his country great service ; but for some time he doubted whether he had benefited himself ; since many of those whose dishonesty he had exposed, and whose illicit gains he had terminated, had friends among persons in authority at home, and greatly prejudiced him there by their misrepresentations, till on his return to England he was able to tell his own story to the First Lord of the Admiralty, who at that time was Lord Howe. The consideration of what recognition his services would receive would never have influenced him, as, from his first entrance into his profession, he laid down as the guiding principle of his conduct, that it was better for a man “ to save an ungrateful country than to give up his own fame ; that posterity would do him justice ; and that an uniform course of honour and integrity seldom fails of bringing a man to the goal of fame at last.” And so it proved in his own case in the present instance. He was known in the West Indies as “ the great little man of whom every one was afraid ;” and when war again broke out, the reputation he had there acquired at once procured him the command of a ship of the line, and opened to him the path to that glory of which no one was ever more honorably desirous, and which, in the history of the world, scarcely one warrior has achieved in an equal degree.

As in the period before the American war, so now also our Government availed itself of this interval of peace to send out expeditions to discover new countries, or to extend our knowledge of those which, though discovered, had been but partially explored ; and one of them seems to claim a particular mention from the singularity of the circumstances which defeated its objects, and another from the importance which the recent discovery of unsuspected treasures in the countries then visited has given to them

in the eyes of the present generation at least, if not of all succeeding ages. In 1787 a small vessel named the *Bounty* was placed under the command of Captain Bligh, who had been one of Cook's officers, to transport to our different West Indian settlements a stock of the breadfruit-tree which was one of the most valuable products of the Society Islands. He was likewise enjoined to visit Java and other countries, where it was hoped that profitable connections might be formed, or serviceable knowledge acquired. He reached Otaheite in safety; but, while he was occupied in collecting the trees which were the principal object of his mission, his crew formed the resolution of defeating it altogether. One of the mates, named Christian, was their leader. Allured by the seductions of the female natives, and the temptation of total idleness in a luxurious climate, he first resolved to desert the ship; then, finding that a majority of the crew were disposed to unite with him in his wickedness, he substituted for his original plan the design of seizing and detaining the ship, and expelling from her the captain and those who adhered to him. Of the forty-six men of whom the crew was composed, only sixteen remained faithful to their duty. These, with Bligh himself, at the beginning of April, 1788, were put on board the ship's launch, were furnished with a small quantity of provisions, a compass and a quadrant, and then were compelled to quit the island. Their sufferings were great. The boat, which was but twenty-three feet long, and less than seven broad, would hardly contain them; while so scanty was their supply of food, that from the very first they limited themselves to a daily ration of an ounce of bread and a quarter of a pint of water a man, and, before they reached land, they were forced to diminish even this miserable allowance. Fortunately Bligh was a man of cheerful temper and indomitable resolution; and his men, as might be expected from the loyalty they had already shown, emulated the example of patience and courage which he showed them. Happily too the weather



was generally, though not uninterruptedly, favorable; and, in spite of having no chart, yet so accurately did the Captain calculate their course, that at the end of two months they reached the very land which from the first he designed to aim at, the north-eastern coast of New South Wales. The natives, however, showed too hostile a disposition to make it prudent for him to remain there, so he proceeded to the Island of Timor, and from thence to Batavia, from which port he easily obtained a passage for himself and his men to England.

He was sent out a second time to carry out the original design of stocking the West Indies with the breadfruit, and, if possible, to seize the mutineers. The trees he obtained: of the men he could procure no intelligence; but another vessel, the Pandora frigate, subsequently discovered and brought home sixteen of them, who were tried by court-martial at Portsmouth, and convicted of mutiny. Those who seemed the worst offenders were executed, and the rest were sentenced to different degrees of punishment. Unfortunately, Christian himself had quitted Otaheite before the arrival of the Pandora, and his subsequent fate, with that of those who had accompanied him on his departure from the island, was not ascertained till above twenty years afterwards, when it was learnt that, after a stay of a few months at Otaheite, they had crossed the ocean with their barbarian wives to a spot since known as Pitcairn's Island. Of the original mutineers, but one, a man of the name of Adams, then survived: but his deceased comrades had left several children, and they formed a flourishing little colony. In the year 1856 their descendants numbered nearly 200 souls; and as the spot on which they were settled was in many respects unsuitable, our Government removed them to Norfolk Island, where they still remain.

The other expedition to which allusion has been made was one which, in 1790, was sent out under Captain Vancouver, to explore the north-western coast of North America, and

also the south-western coast of South America. In the course of his voyage Vancouver examined portions of New Zealand which Cook had not fully surveyed, and also the greater part of the extensive district of New Albion, under which name were then comprised the British settlement of Columbia and the United States territory of Oregon. He paid two visits to Nootka Sound, and examined the straits and inlets around the large island which still bears his name ; and he also collected very extensive and accurate information concerning the Spanish settlement of California, the progress made by the Christian missionaries, who belonged chiefly to the Franciscan and Dominican orders, and the habits, disposition, and prospects of the general population. He spent four years in these interesting investigations, not returning to England till the autumn of 1795 ; and, as a proof of the practical utility of the system which Cook had first established for the preservation of the health of the sailors employed in expeditions of this kind, and which had been generally adopted since his day, it is worth while to record that, out of the hundred and fifty men who composed the crews of Vancouver's two vessels, in all that time only one man had died from disease, though three or four had been lost by different accidents.

As had happened before in the interval between the Seven Years' War and that with the American colonies, the continuance of peace was more than once threatened with interruption ; and again the first cloud arose from the insolence of Spain, though, when war actually broke out, that country was found among our allies. Some of our merchants had fixed themselves on the north-western coast of America, in the neighbourhood of Nootka Sound, with the view of establishing a trade in furs and other commodities to be procured in those regions ; and, in the year 1789, the Spanish Government, under pretence that in so doing our traders had trespassed on the rights granted to

Ferdinand and Isabella by the Pope in the fifteenth century, sent thither a squadron which demolished the buildings belonging to the offending merchants, and carried all the men whom it found there as prisoners to Mexico. The conduct of the Spaniards in this instance bore a striking resemblance to their deeds in the Falkland Islands, of which mention has already been made; and if we did not hesitate to vindicate our honour then, we were still less likely to show any backwardness now, when the government was in the hands of the greatest minister who adorns the annals of the nation. Pitt instantly and vigorously demanded reparation for the insult, indemnification to the merchants, and the abandonment of the claim which the Spaniards had set up; and enforced his demand by making undisguised preparation for war, and by equipping, with a speed at that time unprecedented, a fleet far superior to any that could be sent forth from the Peninsula. And the Spaniards knowing that, in the distracted state of affairs in France, no aid could possibly be expected from that country, submitted to all his demands, consented to restore the lands and buildings which they had seized, and admitted our right to found settlements on any part of the American coast which was not in their own actual occupation.

Another difficulty arose from the obstinacy of Russia, a country with which hitherto, in spite of the pretensions put forward a few years before by the Empress Catharine, there had never been any real interruption of our friendship, since the founder of the empire learnt the art of shipbuilding in our Woolwich dockyard. Russia was now at war with Turkey. The genius of her great General Suvarof, triumphing alike over all obstacles of nature and of art, had taken Ismail and Oczakov, and the results of the war were beginning manifestly to threaten the independence of the Turkish empire. That empire could not fall without great danger to the general balance of power, and

especially to our own interests in the Mediterranean ; and Pitt, who had already checked the progress of Denmark in the North, had curbed the ambition of Austria, and had compelled her to renounce some of her conquests, now opened a negociation with Russia to persuade her to treat with her conquered enemy on terms of moderation. But the wily and pertinacious statesmen who directed her government were not inclined to abandon a prey which they believed to be within their reach to any arguments founded on principles of equity, and rather assumed a tone of indignation, at the interference of a neutral power in a dispute which, as they asserted, concerned only the two nations actually at war. Pitt proposed to compel a more respectful attention to his remonstrances, and again began to augment the navy, and to equip a fleet ; thus a second time making a practical acknowledgment that the navy is the arm which most makes Britain powerful and formidable. When, however, the course of action which he proposed to carry out came under discussion, it was resisted by the Opposition, never more unscrupulous and seldom more shortsighted ; and, though he was supported by a considerable majority, it did not seem to him sufficient, and he abandoned the idea of threatening Russia with war should his advice be disregarded. That, if he had not been so thwarted in Parliament, his remonstrance would have succeeded, may perhaps be inferred from the great abatement in the concessions required of Turkey to which Russia submitted in the negotiations which in the autumn of 1791 were finally concluded by the peace of Yassy.

For eighteen months more England enjoyed complete peace, the more complete because during that time her ancient rival was being torn to pieces by the atrocious Government which had superseded her time-honoured monarchy, and by the still more horrible mobs of which that Government was alternately the master and the slave,



At last the crimes of the Revolution were consummated by the murder of the King ; and, as the existing Government in Paris had already published a decree declaring every nation their enemy, which, rejecting liberty and equality, chose to preserve its ancient constitution, and continued to press forward its attack upon Holland, to which country we were closely bound by solemn treaty, Pitt at once ordered the French ambassador to leave England. It cannot be said that this order gave occasion to the war, for, before it was issued, letters of recall had already been sent from Paris to the French ambassador. But it showed that we agreed with the ruling authorities there that war was inevitable ; and, though the declaration of it on the 1st of February, 1793, came from them, they only anticipated our decision by a few days.

The war in which both nations thus embarked was for many years almost entirely confined by us to naval operations. The two military expeditions to Holland in 1794 and 1799 (the latter of which, indeed, was combined with the despatch of a fleet, and owed its only triumph to that co-operation), and the brief but more successful campaign in Egypt, were hardly of sufficient importance to be admitted as exceptions to this its general character ; in fact, as far as we were concerned, the war may be divided into two halves, the naval and the military, neither portion much clashing with the other. Till the end of the year 1805 our navy performed unparalleled achievements, annihilating the fleets of our enemies ; and only then ceasing to reap further triumphs, because it had left itself no enemies to conquer, while during these years our army was comparatively inactive. For the last seven years (we need hardly make more than a passing allusion to the battle of Maida in 1806), from the time when Wellesley landed in Mondego Bay, to the crowning conquest of Waterloo, our army took the post of honour previously occupied by the navy, and, under a general as invincible

as Nelson himself, reaped a harvest of unbroken glory, of continual and progressive triumph unchequered by a single reverse ; and during this period, though our sailors, as we shall have occasion to show, were never idle whenever or wherever there was anything to be done, they had no longer an opportunity of gaining brilliant successes on a large scale in the open sea ; since the French now limited their enterprises to such as could be attempted by single vessels or small squadrons of frigates, and preferred even to be attacked in their own harbours to courting destruction by sending forth fleets to engage ours, before either could have forgotten the lessons taught to both at the Nile and Trafalgar.

The expectations of war with Spain and Russia which have been mentioned, though they had passed away unrealised, proved favorable to us at this juncture by having led the Government to put the navy into so efficient a state of preparation that, on the breaking out of war, we were at once ready to engage in it with such a force of ships, warlike stores, and trained seamen as we had never had before. The French, too, had been profiting by the interval of peace, and by the stern lessons impressed upon them by Rodney, to increase their fleet in a very formidable manner ; and, at the beginning of this year, they had not fewer than seventy-six sail of the line and eighty-four frigates, nearly all ready for sea. In mere numbers we were considerably stronger : we had a hundred and thirteen serviceable line-of-battle ships and a hundred and seven frigates.\* But this apparent disproportion will be very much lessened when the size of the ships composing the two fleets is taken into consideration. Not only did the French list contain several ships of a hundred and twenty and a hundred and ten guns, while the largest of our vessels carried only one hundred ; not only, again, did their line of battle contain no ship carrying fewer

\* The 50- and 44-gun ships are here included in the list of frigates.

than seventy-four, while in ours thirty were only sixty-fours, but the guns in the French ships were also so much larger than those used in our navy, that an eighty-gun French ship threw as heavy a broadside as an English ninety-eight. And so fully were the French themselves aware of this fact, that they openly boasted that at this time "France was the most redoubtable maritime power in Europe."\*

Nothing can more clearly show how resolved the French were to force war upon us than the fact that, some weeks before it was declared, the batteries at Brest fired on the Childers, a British sixteen-gun sloop under command of Captain R. Barlow, and continued their fire after that officer had hoisted his national colours, while no satisfaction for this insult could be procured from the governing authorities at Paris. In the first weeks of the war, one or two French privateers were taken : on more than one occasion a few shots were interchanged between the British and French cruisers, and one twenty-four gun British frigate, the *Hyæna*, Captain Hargood, was captured in May by the *Concorde*, of forty guns, the leading ship of a small French squadron, which was in sight when the *Hyæna* surrendered. But the first regular action which took place between ships of equal size, and which, ending as it did in the capture of the Frenchman, seems to have a right to be commemorated as the first blow struck by us in the war, was fought by an officer, who subsequently became one of the brightest ornaments of his profession, Captain Edward Pellew. He was in command of the *Nymph*, 36, and in the middle of June was cruising in the channel, looking for the French frigate *Cleopatre*, which a week before he had chased into Cherbourg, when, on the 18th of June, about fifteen miles from the Start Point on his native coast of Devonshire, he dis-

\* Speech of Jean Bon St. André, quoted by James in his 'Naval History from 1743 to 1820;'

covered the ship he was in search of. The *Cleopatre* also had thirty-six guns, and though her crew was the more numerous, it would have been impossible to find two vessels more equally matched in the navies of the two nations. The moment that the *Nymphe* saw her enemy she gave chase, and Captain Mullon, the French commander, was so far from declining the contest, that he at once shortened sail to wait for his antagonist, and withheld his fire till the British ship opened hers. Then a fierce action ensued, both ships running gently before the wind opposite to and at a short distance from each other. In three-quarters of an hour the *Cleopatre's* mizenmast went overboard; her wheel, too, was shot away; and becoming unmanageable, she fell on board the *Nymphe*. The rigging of the two ships became entangled, and Pellew took instant advantage of his position to board her. This step decided the conflict; in fifty-five minutes from the time the first gun was fired, the republican tricolour was hauled down, and the British flag was hoisted in its place. Both ships had suffered severely; we had lost fifty, the French had lost sixty-three men, and among them their gallant captain, who, even in his death pangs, showed his devotion to his country. He had been torn almost in two by a cannon-ball; but, amid the agony of his frightful wound, he recollected that he had in his pocket a list of the coast signals of the French navy. Eager to save a paper of such importance from falling into our hands, he drew them out, as he believed, and tried to gnaw them to pieces; but, by mistake, he had laid his hands on his own commission as an officer, and died with his teeth fixed in that document to which his conduct did such honour.

Before this time, however, we had sent one fleet to sea, which in the course of the summer reaped a triumph under very singular circumstances. Toulon, as an arsenal, was second only to Brest, and the fleet which was lying in that harbour was understood to be in a state of better



preparation for immediate service than any other. Against it a splendid force of twenty sail of the line and nine frigates was sent from England in May. Lord Hood was the Commander-in-chief, and hoisted his flag in the *Victory*, 100. In the same ship he had with him Rear-Admiral Hyde Parker. Sir William Hotham, in the *Britannia*, another hundred gun ship, was second in command; and among the sixty-fours, of which there were four, was Nelson's ship, the *Agamemnon*.\* A fortnight was spent by the Admiral, according to his instructions, in cruising off the Scilly Isles to protect a convoy which was known to be on its way from the Mediterranean; but when that and another from India had passed, Hood lost no more time, but made the best of his way to Gibraltar, watering the fleet partly there and partly at Cadiz; and in the middle of July he moored off Toulon. Here he was joined by a Spanish fleet under Admiral Langara (for the French Republic had declared war against Spain, even before issuing the declaration against us); but though the ships were fine to look at, they were not calculated to be of much use. Nelson declared that a few boats' crews of English seaman

\* The following is a list of Lord Hood's fleet:

Those marked \* composed (with the addition of the *Neapolitan*, 74, II Tancredi) Admiral Hotham's fleet in 1795, *post*, p. 464.

100	{	Victory ..	{ Lord Hood	74	{	Captain*..	Capt. Reeve
			{ Rr. Adm. Sir H. Parker			Fortitude*	— Young
	{	Britannia*	{ Capt Knight		{	Illustrious*	— Frederick
			{ V.-Ad. W. Hotham			Alcide ..	— Linzee
98	{	Windsor Castle*	{ Capt. Holloway	74	{	Egmont ..	— Dickson
			{ V.-Adm. Cosby			Robust ..	— Hon. G. Elphinstone
	{	Princess Royal*	{ Capt. Sir T. Byard		{	Berwick ..	— Sir J. Collins
			{ R.-Adm. Goodall			Leviathan ..	— Hn. H. Conway
74	{	St. George*	{ Capt. Purvis	74	{	Colossus ..	— C. M. Pole
			{ R.-Adm. Gell			Agamemnon*	— Nelson
	{	Terrible*..	{ Capt. Foley		{	Diadem*..	— Sutherland
			{ — Lutwidge			Ardent ..	— Manners
74	{	Courageux*	{ — Hn. W. Waldegrave	74	{	Sutton	
			{ — Mann			Intrepid ..	— Carpenter

In 1795 R.-Adm. Linzee had the *Windsor Castle*; Sir H. Parker, the *St. George*; Capt. Gould the *Bedford*; and Capt. Montgomery the *Courageux*.

would be able to take a Spanish first-rate, and a longer acquaintance gave him a still worse opinion of them, when he found that the men were worn out with a cruise of two months, and that their officers considered it quite natural that they should be so.

Toulon was well able to make a formidable resistance. The town itself was strongly fortified in every direction. Powerful batteries on the surrounding heights commanded every part of the harbour, and within it lay a splendid fleet of upwards of thirty sail of the line, besides smaller vessels ; the greater portion of which were ready for sea. It happened fortunately for the British Admiral that the citizens and the sailors were not inclined to make the resistance which was in their power. The revolution which had taken place in Paris was far from being approved in the distant provinces of France. The ancient constitution had many friends and adherents in the district around Toulon, and in the city itself. Their feelings were largely shared by the sailors, and the commander-in-chief of the fleet, the Comte de Trogo, was a faithful servant of the old dynasty. The Toulonese had been already planning a resistance to the faction which was domineering over the capital when the British fleet came in sight ; and, looking on the British nation rather as political friends than as national enemies, they were well disposed to hail it as a deliverer. The *Victory* had not long been anchored off the entrance to the harbour, and hostile operations had not been commenced, when, towards the end of August, envoys from the city came alongside, proposing to treat with the Admiral for the surrender of Toulon and all the shipping in the port. Hood received them gladly, and willingly promised his assistance to deliver the citizens from the Jacobin yoke which they so much dreaded. He agreed to respect private property, and to look on the fortifications and shipping, which the envoys offered to place in his hands, as a deposit to be restored uninjured

on the establishment of a peaceful government. He had need of great caution and prudence, for even those who now sought his protection were not all actuated by the same views. While De Trogoff, with one large party, sought the re-establishment of the ancient monarchy, a still more numerous body desired to form a separate republic under the protection of England. With these differences of opinion the Admiral justly thought that he had no concern. His mission was to weaken the existing Government of France as incurably and on principle hostile to England, and to favour the establishment of any authority which might be likely to entertain more friendly sentiments. At the same time he did not conceal his own prepossessions in favour of a restoration of the former dynasty, and abstained from openly and formally acting on the proposals that had been made to him till he received assurances that Louis XVII. had been proclaimed in the city, and that the municipal authorities had taken the oaths of allegiance to him as their sovereign. He learned at the same time that a portion of the fleet, devoted to democratic sentiments, and viewing the proceedings of their comrades with abhorrence, had formally renounced their obedience to M. de Trogoff, and had transferred it to the second in command, Rear-Admiral Jullien; and, having manned the forts on the left of the harbour, announced their resolution with them and with those ships which were at their disposal to resist the entrance of the British fleet to the utmost of their power. Hood, who had already sent away a strong detachment of his fleet to the eastward, so that he had only twelve sail of the line at hand, prepared to give battle to the discontented faction, and the British sailors were anxiously hoping that they would come out and fight. They did not do so, but, after some little bravado, obeyed Lord Hood's orders, and retired into the inner harbour, where, a day or two afterwards, the sailors deserted the ships, landed, and marched

in a body to join the army, which, under General Carteau, was advancing to reduce the city to obedience to the republican Government. It was soon seen that, unless the inhabitants of the surrounding province supported the citizens in their revolt with such unanimity as to enable them to resist the attack preparing against them on the side of the land, we should be unable to hold the city ourselves. We were powerful as auxiliaries, especially from the entrance which our mastery of the sea secured to supplies of all kinds ; but we had no means of acting as principals in the impending warfare. Hood had brought out two regiments, and those he landed, with some of the Marines belonging to the fleet, which seized on Fort Lamalgue, commanding the principal roadstead ; and which, in a sharp action, defeated a detachment of the republican army. And, further to encourage the citizens, he appointed one of his own officers, Rear-Admiral Goodall, Governor of Toulon. He also, at the beginning of September, sent Nelson to Genoa and Naples to procure ten thousand soldiers from those courts. The troops were promised, and the greater part of them were sent ; but it soon became painfully evident that the Toulonese had engaged in a measure wholly beyond their strength to carry out, and, in so doing, had rushed upon their own destruction. The republican leaders occupied the heights, erecting on them batteries which commanded both city and harbour, and from thence keeping up a heavy fire on our ships and on our sailors, who, under the command of Captain Keith Elphinstone, of the *Robuste*, manned the forts of which we had taken possession. Elphinstone, who, in a subsequent year, was raised to the Peerage as Lord Keith, showed considerable ability and obtained great credit in the daily warfare to which he was thus exposed ; but the entire British force on shore scarcely exceeded two thousand men ; and, of the other allies of the hapless citizens, the Neapolitans did them



but little good, and the Spaniards only aggravated their distresses. Nelson affirmed that the latter plundered and murdered the very men for whom they professed to be fighting;\* and they sought to quarrel with Lord Hood himself, setting up a claim for their Lieutenant-General Valdez to be recognised as Governor of Toulon, on the ground that he was superior in rank to the British Major-General O'Hara, who had arrived from Gibraltar to relieve Admiral Goodall of that command. Hood easily silenced so absurd a pretension, but it boded ill for the duration of the alliance between Britain and Spain that, at the very outset, so cruel and lawless a disposition should be shown by the men, and such unreasoning arrogance by their commanders.

The monotony of these operations on land was slightly varied on one occasion by an action fought by the *Agamemnon*, which, towards the latter end of October, was cruising by herself off the Sardinian coast, when, one morning long before daybreak, she saw five sail standing to the north-west. She at once pursued them, and in a couple of hours came up with the largest of them, a 44-gun frigate, the *Melpomene*, reputed to be the best vessel and the fastest sailer of her class in the whole French navy. Nelson had proved the *Agamemnon* to be the fastest line-of-battle ship in Lord Hood's fleet, and was well pleased now to have an opportunity of trying her speed and handiness with an enemy. Both ships went on with every sail set, the frigate trying every manœuvre to make her escape; the *Agamemnon* exerting herself with equal energy to prevent her from succeeding in her attempt. The other vessels, which were three frigates of forty-two, forty, and thirty-two guns, with a sixteen-gun corvette, steered after them; eager at first to join in the fight, in which they had little doubt that their united force would prove an overmatch for their single antagonist, little knowing who commanded her.

\* Nelson's 'Despatches,' vol. i, p. 232.

The *Melpomene* was admirably manœuvred. As soon as daylight broke she hoisted her national colours, and opened a fire on the *Agamemnon* from her stern chasers, often availing herself of the superiority in speed which a frigate must have over a two-decker, to yaw and give her a broadside. The *Agamemnon* could only reply with a few of her foremost guns, and could only bring even them to bear at times; nevertheless so superior was the precision of our fire to that of the French, that, after two hours of this desultory fighting, the Frenchman was on the point of surrendering, when the two combatants became becalmed, while the wind freshened behind them, and enabled the other frigates to join their consort. The *Agamemnon* was too much crippled in her rigging to be able to close with them so as to continue the contest; and the enemy, though now united, were too much daunted at the damage inflicted by her on the antagonist which she had engaged, to venture to renew the action, though for several hours it was wholly in their power. They took refuge in the harbours of Corsica, and it is remarkable that eventually, after the operations for the reduction of that island, which we shall have to relate among the achievements of the next year, all of them, which were not destroyed, fell into Nelson's hands.

Meanwhile the impossibility of holding Toulon became day by day more manifest. The army surrounding it had been gradually raised to sixty thousand men, and Dugommier, a general of deservedly high reputation among the republican officers, had arrived to take the command. What rendered the recovery of the city more celebrated still in after times was the circumstance that among the officers whom he brought with him was Napoleon Buonaparte, who then held a commission as captain of artillery, and who, on this occasion first gave proofs of that thorough knowledge of his profession, and intuitive genius for war which afterwards raised him to his unparalleled eminence. Under his guidance fresh

batteries were constructed in more advantageous positions, rendering the posts occupied by our men no longer tenable; and at last, on the 17th of December, Lord Hood held a council of war, at which it was unanimously resolved to evacuate the city, and to destroy the magazines and dockyards, and all the French ships which could not be carried off. The next day the execution of this plan was committed to Captain Sidney Smith, and, had he been able to employ none but Englishmen in it, it would have succeeded entirely. But the Spanish fleet claimed a share in the enterprise, and their want of skill and even of courage marred the success of that portion of it in which they were concerned. The force placed at Smith's disposal consisted of an English fireship, three English, and three Spanish gunboats. With the English boats he blew up the forts which had been in our possession, totally destroyed the arsenal, the magazines, the abundant stores contained in them, and many of the ships; but the Spanish boats, terrified by the heavy fire kept up from some of the batteries on shore, retreated before they had set fire to half the ships which they had undertaken to burn, and in their hurry kindled the vessels laden with powder which they had been charged to scuttle, and which by their explosion killed some of our men, and seriously endangered the rest of those around. Smith, learning their failure, endeavoured to perform their task as well as his own, and did accomplish some part of it, but part he was compelled to leave undone, and consequently seven or eight French ships of the line remained unhurt. Fourteen ships, however, were burnt, and nineteen were brought away; and a very heavy blow was inflicted on the enemy, affecting not only their existing power, but their subsequent resources. What gave the British commander almost as much pleasure as the military advantages thus gained, was the preservation of the greater part of the citizens, of whom he received nearly fifteen thousand on

board his fleet, and sent them to England ; the general asylum for all fugitives from the ferocity of the revolutionary party, which was still deluging the fairest provinces and most splendid cities of France with their own blood. Of those who were left, nearly half were massacred : many by the soldiers, who, though no longer resisted, took a savage pleasure in shooting, stabbing, and hacking to pieces women and children whose age and sex proved them innocent of the revolt ; the men, whose guilt was assumed as established by the mere fact of their existence, perished under the guillotine.

Toulon was not the only place which at this time was disgusted with the barbarity of its new rulers, and eager to throw off their yoke. Paoli, already conspicuous in the history of Corsica, headed the discontented party in that island, and, very soon after Lord Hood reached Toulon, repaired to the British fleet, and besought him to send a small squadron to support his countrymen in their endeavours to reassert their freedom. Lord Hood thought the opening thus afforded him more full of promise as to the permanent advantage to be derived from it, than even the revolt of Toulon ; and at once despatched a force of three line-of-battle ships and two frigates under Captain Linzee, of the *Alcide*, as commodore, with instructions to win over the French troops in garrison in the island, if possible ; and, should they reject his offers, to blockade them, and endeavour to starve them into submission. On his way Linzee touched at Villa Franca, and endeavoured to prevail on the inhabitants of that district to follow the example of the Toulonese, and throw off their allegiance to the existing French Government. Meeting with no success there, he crossed over to Corsica. The chief strongholds of that island were the fortified towns of San Fiorenzo, Bastia, and Calvi. Each was occupied by a sufficient garrison, and, though there seemed reason to believe that Paoli's report of the favourable disposition of the peaceful



inhabitants was correct, the troops disdainfully rejected Linzee's proposals. That officer was placed in some perplexity. In his judgment, the force under his command was far from being strong enough to blockade the three towns at once ; while they were so near one another that to blockade one or two and leave the entrance to the other free, would have been useless. After some deliberation he determined to attack Forneilli, a place about two miles from San Fiorenzo, fortified with a tower and a redoubt ; but he lost some time in his arrangements, and, when at last he opened his attack, he found Forneilli so much more strongly fortified than he had expected that he was forced to abandon the attempt.

As soon, however, as the evacuation of Toulon left Lord Hood at liberty, he turned his attention to the retrieval of this repulse. His first step was to place a squadron of frigates under Nelson's command to cruise off the north-western coast of the island, so as to prevent supplies from being introduced into San Fiorenzo or Calvi. His next was to go thither himself with some of his best seventy-fours, and a body of about fourteen hundred soldiers under Major-General Dundas. Before he arrived, Nelson had done something towards facilitating his enterprise, for, having learnt that the French in San Fiorenzo drew their principal supplies of flour from a mill near the shore, he landed with a body of seamen and soldiers from the *Agamemnon*, burnt the mill, threw all the flour contained in it and in a large storehouse adjacent into the sea, and regained his ship without the loss of a single man. Lord Hood, who had been somewhat delayed in his passage to Corsica by a storm of unusual violence, in which the *Victory* was nearly lost, reached it on the 24th of January, and then, sending Nelson round the island to prevent supplies from getting in to Bastia, the capital, he took charge of the siege of San Fiorenzo himself. On his way Nelson summoned the town of Maginaggio,

and, receiving a defiance from the governor, landed with a few seamen and marines, routed the garrison, who indeed fled without striking a blow, hauled down the French colours with his own hand, destroyed a great quantity of provisions which were being prepared for the use of Bastia, and a number of French vessels which he found in the harbour, and the same afternoon proceeded on his way.

Lord Hood ratified Linzee's judgment by selecting Forneilli for attack before moving against the other and more important town. The garrison of the tower of Mortella, which had been taken and again lost by Linzee three months before, fought with great bravery, and inflicted heavy loss on the *Fortitude*, 74, Captain W. Young, to which the task of battering it was assigned; but the force which Hood had brought against it was too strong to be long resisted, and Mortella fell. The redoubt of Forneilli was next to be attacked, and the exertions of the seamen in the preliminary operations astonished even those who thought they knew all that a British sailor could do. The redoubt was fortified in a most formidable manner, and was so strongly constructed as to bid defiance to any ordinary attack; but, at a small distance from it was a rock, rising seven hundred feet above the level of the sea, which entirely commanded it, and which had been left unfortified and unguarded from a belief that it was inaccessible. In fact in many places it was almost perpendicular, and, though there was a path leading to the summit, it was in very few places wide enough to allow more than one person to stand. For the most part above this path were overhanging rocks, below it was a sheer precipice: yet up along this fearful track did our seamen drag a battery of heavy guns and planted them so as to sweep the inside of the redoubt; the garrison of which, on the 16th of February, were suddenly amazed by a tremendous cannonade which they could neither return nor resist. They evacuated the post and retreated on San

Fiorenzo, and the next day they abandoned that town also, and moved across the narrow neck of land which separates it from Bastia, and threw themselves into that city, resolved to concentrate all their efforts on the defence of that, the strongest place in the island. In the harbour of San Fiorenzo were lying *La Minerve*, 42, and *La Fortunée*, 40, two of the consorts of the *Melpomene* when Nelson fought her in October. The French, before they quitted the town burnt the *Fortunée*; but the *Minerve* became our prize, had her name changed to the *San Fiorenzo*, and was reckoned for some years one of our best frigates.

Meanwhile Nelson had reconnoitred Bastia and the adjacent coast by land as well as by sea; and, though some of the works were already strong, and the garrison were busy in adding to them, he reported to Lord Hood that it would be easy to land both troops and cannon, and that a land-force of a thousand men with a few ships would be sufficient to reduce it. Had those in command of the troops resembled him, it would have been soon done. Unluckily General Dundas, though a singular crisis afterwards made him Commander-in-chief, was one of the most irresolute and incompetent of men; and when, after a few days he resigned the command in consequence of his differences with Lord Hood, his successor, General d'Aubant, proved still more indifferent than he to the performance of his duty and to the honour of his country. Under their command were sixteen hundred troops, and a hundred and eighty artillerymen, all in the finest condition for service; a force nearly double of that which Nelson pronounced sufficient for the work before them; and yet the two generals agreed in pronouncing its accomplishment beyond their power. Nelson burning with indignation, decided that, for the honour of England, the attempt to take Bastia must be made; that it would be less discreditable to fail than to make no endeavour to succeed; and that, if the army would not try it, the fleet must.

Should he fail, he believed that "the country would sooner forgive an officer for attacking his enemy than for leaving it alone." Lord Hood agreed with him, and left everything to his judgment. Yet, even when it had been decided to undertake the siege, the General persisted in refusing to lend a single soldier or a single cannon, but retired to San Fiorenzo, and there kept the troops who were eager to share the labours and honours of their comrades in the fleet in total inactivity.

With all his intrepidity and audacity, Nelson was never rash; he pledged himself to his admiral "to undertake nothing but what he had a moral certainty of succeeding in." And now that he was trusted to justify by success the opinion he had so positively given, his skill and prudence were as conspicuous as his boldness and enterprise. As early as the 19th of February, the very day on which he had made his first reconnaissance, he had taken a fortified town called Morino, a little to the north of Bastia; and a second reconnaissance which he made four days later, during which he was hotly assailed by the enemy's batteries, "turned," to use his own expression, "into a battle." The *Agamemnon* was supported by two frigates, the *Romulus* and *Tartar*, and, as the ships passed slowly in front of the town, the batteries opened upon them with both shot and shells from above thirty guns. On this Nelson backed his maintopsail, and for an hour and three-quarters kept up a fire "so strong and close," that at last the French ran from their guns. One of their batteries, containing six guns, was totally destroyed. If he had but had a few troops on board he would have stormed the town that day.

The citizens were eager to surrender, and would have sent out a boat to treat for a capitulation had not St. Michel, the French commissioner, who was acting as governor, declared he would blow up the citadel if such a step were adopted. Two days later Nelson was preparing



to repeat his blow, but was prevented by a sudden calm from getting as near to the town as before, and in a few days the opportunity for carrying the place by a sudden assault passed away, as the French officers were indefatigable in strengthening the fortifications, and soon rendered them by far more formidable than they had been when the *Agamemnon* first arrived.

At the beginning of March the weather became rough, threatening at one time to blow him off the coast; but still he kept up the blockade of the town from the side of the sea with great perseverance, and by the middle of the month had reduced it to such distress that a pound of bread was sold for half-a-crown. He himself in his ship was almost equally straightened; he reported to Lord Hood that he was "without firing, wine, beef, pork, flour, and almost without water," and that his ship had become "so light," from the total exhaustion of her stores of every kind that she could no longer "hold her side to the wind." The Admiral, however, contrived to supply his wants, and he was almost equally cheered by the arrival of two military officers, De Butts of the Engineers, and Duncan of the Artillery, who, after a careful examination of Bastia and its defences, entirely agreed with him in the practicability of at once attacking it. The General, however, still adhered to his own opinion; and Lord Hood was actually obliged to send to Naples to beg for some mortars, field-pieces, and ammunition, because those in store at San Fiorenzo were refused to him. Fortunately some men of the 11th, 25th, 30th, and 69th regiments had been originally sent on board the ships to do the duty of marines; and though at the time of the attack on San Fiorenzo, these had been landed, D'Aubant could not refuse the demand of Lord Hood to send them back to the ships. On the 4th of April the Admiral himself came round and took the command; still, however, leaving the chief conduct of the operations to Nelson. Nelson's energy,

if possible, increased every day; he pitched a tent on shore, above which the English colours were hoisted, and he passed to and fro between it and his ship so constantly that it could only be known where he was by seeing where the operations were proceeding with the greatest rapidity. Many of the seamen were landed with him, and they too worked as men were likely to work under such a leader. He, with the aid of Lieutenant Duncan, marked out the ground for the batteries, and to arm them, the sailors again dragged the guns and mortars up heights which would have seemed inaccessible to all but themselves, made roads, and cut down trees to form abattis, thinking no employment foreign to their duty, and no task too hard for their strength.

By the 11th they had completed three batteries, armed with sixteen heavy guns and mortars; and, when they were ready to open their fire, Lord Hood sent a flag of truce in a boat to summon the town to surrender. St. Michel replied that "he had hot shot for our ships, and bayonets for our troops; when two-thirds of his men were killed, he would then trust to the generosity of the English." Immediately a heavy fire was opened on the town, and was so vigorously replied to, that the hot shot of which the commissioner had boasted, set on fire the *Proselyte*, a vessel which we had brought out from Toulon, and had converted into a floating battery. Day after day we continued both firing and constructing fresh batteries, and our officers were soon informed by deserters that the effect of our fire was very great. More than once General d'Aubant actually came across from San Fiorenzo with all his staff, to see how the siege was getting on; but was never moved by the vast exertions which those engaged in it were making to lend them the smallest assistance. Nelson believed that the sailors' indignation at his conduct had stimulated his men to exertions of which they would otherwise have been incapable. They worked on harder than ever; the new batteries were erected on heights still more steep and

rugged than ever, and Nelson, with a natural pride in his profession, affirmed that "the labours of getting guns up to them would, in his opinion, never have been accomplished by any other than British seamen." They opened on the 1st of May; the blockade was kept up with unremitting vigilance, the ships being moored across the harbour's mouth, and three boats from each rowing guard every night. And he now began to predict not only the fall of the place, which he had never doubted, but the day, which he fixed between the 20th and 24th of May. His prediction was verified to the letter, if it may not be said that it was even anticipated by a day. At four o'clock in the afternoon of the 19th a boat came out from the town to the Victory with proposals to surrender, and one hour afterwards, General d'Aubant, having received some reinforcements from Gibraltar, arrived from San Fiorenzo with his army, and made his appearance on the hills which overlook the town just in time to find the work which he had pronounced impracticable, triumphantly achieved without his aid.

A couple of days were consumed in the negotiations necessary to fix the precise terms of the surrender. On the 22nd the French colours were struck on all the forts, batteries, and outposts, and the British ensign was hoisted in their stead; and the next day between four and five thousand troops in French pay laid down their arms to twelve hundred Englishmen. Only two hundred of those employed on land were actually seamen, but Nelson affirmed that "he could say truly that it had been a naval expedition," since not only had the ships blockaded it by sea, but they had been sailors who had constructed the batteries, hauled the great guns up the rocks, and then fought them on shore.

The capital being thus won, Paoli had no difficulty in persuading the chief council of the island to renounce their allegiance to France, and to transfer it to the British crown; but to give complete effect to this vote it was

necessary to reduce Calvi, a town on the western side, a little to the south of San Fiorenzo. The resolution to attack that town was at once adopted, and the expectation of a second triumph was soon greatly encouraged by the arrival of General Charles Stuart, an officer of a very different stamp from D'Aubant and Dundas, to take the command of the land-force. Lord Hood's first idea was to return himself to Toulon to watch the fleet in that harbour, consisting of the ships which had not been destroyed in the preceding winter and of a few more which had joined them subsequently; and to leave Nelson to conduct the siege of Calvi. But, while he was preparing to depart, on the 7th of June intelligence reached him that the French had put to sea, and he at once set sail in pursuit of them, taking the *Agamemnon* with him. The wind was so unfavourable that he was two days getting round to Calvi, where at daybreak on the 9th he joined Vice-Admiral Hotham, his second in command, and he had hardly done so when one of the look-out frigates made the signal for the enemy's fleet to the westward. Without a moment's delay he gave chase. He had fourteen sail of the line, besides frigates; they had only seven: and could he have come up with them and brought them to action, no one in the British fleet doubted of a glorious day. They were in sight the whole of the next two days; on the 11th they effected their escape into Gourjean Bay. Hood would gladly have followed them in; he had arranged a distribution of his force so that two of his line-of-battle ships should occupy the attention of the forts on either side of the bay, while the rest should double on the outermost vessels, and, after capturing them, should proceed to attack the others. The wind, which, whenever there was any, blew right off the shore, hindered the execution of this plan for a time, and finally a Council of War decided against it under existing circumstances.

As soon as Lord Hood had ascertained the superiority of his fleet to that of the enemy, he sent the *Agamemnon*



back to Bastia, to convey the troops there round to Calvi. No time was lost: in four days she reached Bastia, embarked the soldiers and conducted them into Mortella Bay. Nelson, in company with General Stuart, examined the coast all around, and on the 19th disembarked the troops without opposition at a narrow inlet called Porto Agro, about three miles and a half from the town. A body of seamen was also landed, who instantly began, as at Bastia, to drag the guns up the hills to form a battery; and Nelson again pitched a tent on the beach, and once more united the characters of a naval and military officer. Calvi was strongly fortified itself, and was further defended by three forts: San Francesco, commanding the approach by them on the northern side; Monachesco, about a mile and a quarter to the south-west; Mozelle, about a half a mile to the west; and also by a powerful battery, called the Fountain, on a shoulder of a hill between the latter fort and San Francesco. There were besides in the harbour two French frigates, the *Melpomene* and the *Mignonne*, the remainder of the squadron which the *Agamemnon* had attacked in the preceding autumn. It is hardly worth while to recapitulate the details of the siege, which in its general features was entirely similar to that of Bastia. At the end of June Lord Hood returned from watching the French fleet, and lent Nelson some of his heavy guns from the *Victory*, to man his batteries; entrusting to him, as at Bastia, the conduct of the whole, as far as the fleet was concerned. As at Bastia, too, he was everywhere and everything; and, as at Bastia, under the influence of his example, the sailors put forth almost superhuman exertions. At the siege of that town Nelson had been slightly wounded; here he received a more serious injury from a shot which, striking the ground close to him, drove some stones into his right eye, and deprived him of the sight of it for ever. But, though the suffering was for a time severe, he only allowed it to interrupt his labours for a single day: gradu-

ally batteries were erected: the enemy's forts were stormed, and rendered untenable; and at last, on the 1st of August, the garrison proposed a capitulation. The gallantry which they had shown secured them the most honorable terms; they were allowed a respite of a week, to see if the Toulon fleet could relieve them: and, as no relief came, on the 10th they marched out at the great gate of the town with all the honours of war. The British troops marched in; and, as Nelson said, "George III. became king of Corsica." The frigates *Melpomene* and *Mignonne* were surrendered: so that the entire squadron of Nelson's old antagonists thus fell into his hands. And he himself exulted that the reduction of this town also was the achievement of his seamen; that not only the batteries had been constructed by them, and the guns been dragged up by them, but that, with the addition of a single artilleryman and a single gunner, they had also been fought by them; and the General confirmed his boast, and on all occasions did full justice to the unsurpassed gallantry of his naval comrades. Lord Hood returned to England, leaving the chief command to Admiral Hotham; who lay for some time watching the fleet in Gourjean Bay, with the resolution of bringing it to action whenever it should come out; but this design failed. At the beginning of November the weather became so rough that our ships were blown off the coast, and the French commander, Admiral Martin, availed himself of the moment to escape into Toulon. A day or two afterwards Nelson sailed to Toulon to reconnoitre them, advancing so far into the harbour that a report got abroad that the *Agamemnon* had been taken. He ascertained that the whole French force there amounted to twenty-two sail; though he was not in every case able to distinguish ships of the line from frigates: and, as our force was inferior in number, he anticipated a busy winter. But the French never moved; and four months elapsed before the roar of hostile cannon was again heard over the waters of the Mediterranean.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1794.

Lord Howe commands the Channel Fleet—Is unable to bring the French to action—Discontent with him at home—Both nations reinforce their fleets the next year—Savage edicts of the French Government—Both fleets leave their harbours in May, 1794—Howe meets the French May 28th—Action, and on the 29th—Battle of June 1st—Howe might have made the victory more decisive—Admiral Montague falls in with M. Villaret Joyeuse, but escapes—Capture of the *Alexander*—Skilful escape of Sir J. Saumarez from a superior force—Sir John B. Warren with a squadron of frigates twice defeats the French—The *Artois* takes the *Revolutionnaire*—Great general preponderance of British success at sea—Operations in the West Indies—We take Miquelon, St. Pierre and Tobago—Fail at Martinique in 1793—Take it in 1794—Take *Sainte Lucie* and *Guadeloupe*—*Guadeloupe* is retaken by the French—Operations against *San Domingo*.

THE advantage of presenting the operations of our Mediterranean fleet under Lord Hood in unbroken connection, has led to uniting the history of two years together in the last chapter. We must now go back to the beginning of the war, when Lord Howe was appointed to the command of the Channel Fleet. With equal promptitude the French Government applied themselves to the task of assembling a powerful force in the ports of Brest and Rochefort, which was to be entrusted to Admiral Morard de Galles: but the delays inevitable in some degree at the commencement of any war, were so tedious on this occasion, that it was the middle of July before either fleet was ready to sail. At last, on the 14th of that month, Lord Howe put to sea with fifteen sail of the line and nine frigates; and, ten days afterwards, hearing that the French also were at sea off Belleisle, with seventeen sail of the line and five frigates, he returned to Plymouth, picked up two more seventy-fours,

which had been promised him, and worked down to the south-west to look for the enemy. On the 31st he came in sight of them, a short distance from Belleisle. They were watching there for a convoy of merchant-ships from America, whose protection had been especially enjoined on the Admiral. Howe at once formed in line of battle, and stood in towards the land; but, as they presently tacked to the eastward, he was unable to get very near to them that evening. The next morning he renewed his effort, and at one moment, when a light breeze sprang up from the north-west, it seemed likely to be successful; but in a little time it shifted to the north-east, and baffled him, and when daylight broke on the 2nd of August, not a single ship of the enemy was in sight. The wind became very rough, and, as the navigation on that part of the French coast is intricate and dangerous, Howe led the fleet back into Torbay, to wait for a return of favourable weather.

For three months he hovered about without again getting sight of the enemy; sometimes lying in Torbay to shelter his ships from the gales which were unusually violent that autumn, and sometimes sallying out to the westward to protect one or two fleets of merchantmen bound for or from America, whose safety he completely ensured; but, in the middle of November, having been further strengthened by a powerful squadron under Admiral Bowyer, which raised his entire force to twenty-two sail of the line, he again bore down to the French coast, and was nearly being rewarded by a very singular piece of success. A squadron of six sail of the line, each carrying seventy-four guns, two frigates, and two smaller vessels, under the command of M. de Vanstabel, was cruising in Cancale Bay, on the look-out for a squadron which the English papers had announced to be on the point of sailing to the westward under Sir John Jervis. Mistaking Lord Howe's fleet for a convoy of merchantmen, M. de Vanstabel bore down upon it, and



came within six or seven miles of it before he discovered his mistake. Our leading squadron at once gave chase, but the wind was very fresh, and the French ships, being as usual by far the better sailers, carried with ease and safety a greater press of sail than any of ours could venture to hoist, while even the more closely-reefed canvas which our ships set carried away or sprung several of their top-masts. Had not the wind which, when the enemy were first discovered, was south by east, shifted a little to the southward, they would have got off without a single shot being fired at them. But this shift, slight as it was, enabled the *Latona*, a 38-gun frigate, admirably handled by her commander, Captain Thornborough, to weather one of the French frigates, which he would have entirely cut off from her consorts, had not the French Commodore, seeing her danger, himself borne down, supported by a second ship of the line, to her rescue. Both the seventy-fours fired their broadsides at the *Latona*, and the little frigate, uninjured and undismayed, luffed up and returned their fire with such precision as to do considerable injury to the *Tigre*, M. de Vanstable's own ship. Though no other British ship was near the *Latona*, the French abstained from any attempt to take advantage of her isolated situation. In the evening the wind shifted back to its old quarter, and continued veering round to the eastward all night. The change was entirely favourable to the enemy; and, though the next morning they were still in sight, and though those of our ships which were nearest to them continued the chase for a short time, every hour increased the distance of the French, and before noon all attempt to overtake them was abandoned. Nor, though Lord Howe continued to cruise about for nearly a month longer, did he again get sight of a single enemy.

Neither the British nor the French nation were entirely pleased with this absence of any important results from the equipment of these powerful fleets; but they showed their

displeasure in very different manners. In England the people wrote squibs against their Admiral, as one who having, like Cæsar, seen his enemy, had no ambition to complete the parallel by defeating him,\* while the Government, with more judgment, if with less wit, contented themselves with strengthening his fleet with a reinforcement which should give him a decisive superiority on the occasion of his next meeting the enemy. The treatment which the French seamen received was equally characteristic of the Government then existing in their country. M. Morard de Galles, indeed, was only superseded, but many of the captains, lieutenants, and even of the common sailors, were guillotined, others were imprisoned; and, to encourage them further, a decree was passed that the captain and officers of any ship that surrendered to an enemy, however overpowering the hostile force might be, till she was actually in danger of sinking, should all be punished with death. If the Government lasted, it was abundantly clear that no scruples would arise to prevent the entire fulfilment of this edict. At the same time it was sought to allure the lower ranks of the seamen to acts of heroism by circulating among them fabulous accounts of the exploits of the French navy in former days, even in times when it had no existence, adding to them assertions which with equally little foundation they affirmed to have been made by British Admirals, that their fleets had never gained an advantage over an equal force of French ships. M. de Villaret

\* One of these squibs, in Latin and English, is given by Sir John Barrow in his 'Life of Howe,' p. 220:—

"Cum Cæsar Romæ Gallos devicerat hostes,  
Verba tria enarrant fortia facta ducis:  
Howe sua nunc brevius verbo complectitur uno,  
Et 'vidi' nobis omnia gesta refert."

"When Cæsar had the Roman foe subdued, ]  
He told in three short words the deed was done:  
Howe, with more silent modesty endued,  
Relates concisely what he 'saw' in one."

Joyeuse, who, as Captain of the *Trajan* in the fleet of 1793, had established a high reputation for skill in handling his ship, and in whom youthful ardour and republican enthusiasm were expected to be an efficient substitute for extensive experience, was raised to the rank of Rear-Admiral, and made Commander-in-chief; and on the 16th of May he weighed anchor and sailed out of Brest at the head of a splendid fleet of twenty-five sail of the line, and seventeen frigates. Howe, with thirty-four sail of the line, twelve frigates, and a few smaller vessels, had already been at sea a fortnight. Besides fighting the Brest fleet, he was also charged with the task of escorting to a safe distance three merchant-convoys of great value, bound to the East Indies, to the West Indies, and to Newfoundland; and also of attempting to intercept a French convoy which was known to be on its way from the West Indies, and was reported to amount to three hundred and fifty ships, and which subsequently proved really to number one hundred and seventeen. And he applied himself with equal zeal and judgment to the accomplishment of each of these objects. Three of his ships carried a hundred guns each: the *Queen Charlotte*, in which his own flag was hoisted, and the *Royal Sovereign* and *Royal George*, the flagships of the second and third in command, Vice-Admiral Graves and Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander Hood. Among the other admirals now serving in this fleet was Admiral Alan Gardner, in the *Queen*; and among the captains was Collingwood, Nelson's dearest friend, and successor in the command of the *Trafalgar* fleet; Duckworth, who will be more than once mentioned in these pages hereafter, though, singularly enough, his chief exploits were performed against nations as yet in alliance with us, the Spaniards and the Turks; Gambier, the Commander under whom Cochrane performed his great achievements in the Basque Roads; and the *Aquilon* frigate, 32, was commanded by Stopford, whom the present genera-

tion has seen directing the naval power of Britain to shield the Sultan from the encroachments of his rebellious vassal.\*

\* The following is a list of the two fleets after Admiral Montagu's division had parted from Lord Howe:—

## BRITISH.

100	{	Queen Charlotte ... ..	{	Admiral Earl Howe.
			{	Captain Sir R. Curtis.
			{	Captain Sir A. S. Douglas.
	{	Royal Sovereign ... ..	{	V.-Admiral Graves.
			{	Captain H. Nichols.
		Royal George ... ..	{	V.-Admiral Sir A. Hood.
98	{	Barfleur ... ..	{	Captain W. Domett.
			{	Rear-Admiral G. Bowyer.
		Impregnable ... ..	{	Captain Collingwood.
80	{	Queen ... ..	{	Rear-Admiral Caldwell.
			{	Captain G. Westcott.
		Glory ... ..	{	Rear-Admiral Alan Gardner.
	{	Gibraltar .. ..	{	Captain Hutt.
			{	Captain Elphinston.
		Cæsar ... ..	{	Captain Mackenzie.
	{		{	Captain Molloy.
		Bellerophon ... ..	{	Rear-Admiral Pasley.
			{	Captain Hope.
	{	Montague ... ..	{	Captain Montague.
		Tremendous ... ..	{	Captain Pigott.
		Valiant ... ..	{	Captain Pringle.
	{	Ramillies ... ..	{	Captain H. Harvey.
		Audacious ... ..	{	Captain W. Parker.
		Brunswick ... ..	{	Captain J. Harvey.
74	{	Alfred ... ..	{	Captain Bazely.
		Defence ... ..	{	Captain Gambier.
		Leviathan ... ..	{	Captain Lord Hugh Seymour.
	{	Majestic ... ..	{	Captain Cotton.
		Invincible ... ..	{	Captain Pakenham.
		Orion ... ..	{	Captain Duckworth.
	{	Russell ... ..	{	Captain J. W. Payne.
		Marlborough ... ..	{	Captain Berkeley.
		Thunderer ... ..	{	Captain Bertie.
	{	Culloden ... ..	{	Captain Schomberg.

## FRENCH.

120	{	Montagne ... ..	{	Rear-Admiral Villaret Joyeuse.
			{	Commodore Bayere.
			{	Captain Vignet.
110	{	Republicain .. ..	{	Rear-Admiral Bouvet.
			{	Captain Lebeau.
		Terrible .. ..	{	Captain Louger.
	{	Revolutionaire.. ..	{	Captain Vaudangel.
		Indomptable .. ..	{	Captain Lamel.
		Jacobin .. ..	{	Captain Gossin.
80	{	Juste .. ..	{	Captain Blavet.
		Scipion .. ..	{	Captain Huquet.



As soon as Howe got clear of our own coasts he detached a powerful squadron of eight sail of the line and several frigates, under Rear-Admiral Montagu, to protect the merchantmen, ordering part of the squadron to return when it had conducted them as far as the latitude of Cape Finisterre ; and with the main body of the fleet, now reduced to twenty-six line-of-battle ships and eight frigates, he himself stood over to Ushant, and on the 9th of May reconnoitred Brest Harbour, where he saw the French fleet evidently preparing, but not yet quite ready, for sea. Thinking that, when they did come out, their first object would be to protect their West Indian fleet, he cruised about on the track by which that might be expected to arrive, and, on the 19th, returned to Ushant, and found M. de Villaret Joyeuse was gone. It was afterwards ascertained that on his way back he had passed close to the enemy, but had been prevented from seeing them by a

FRENCH FLEET (*continued*).

74	Achille .. .. .	Captain La Vellegris
	Amerique .. .. .	Captain L' Heritier.
	Convention .. .. .	Captain Allary.
	Entreprenant .. .. .	Captain Le Franc.
	Æole .. .. .	Captain Keraquin.
	Gasparin .. .. .	Captain Jardi.
	Jemappes .. .. .	Captain des Martes.
	Impétueux .. .. .	Captain Donville.
	Montagnard .. .. .	Captain Bompart.
	Mont Blanc .. .. .	Captain Theocnard.
	Mercure .. .. .	Captain Lairguy.
	Neptune .. .. .	Captain Tippaine.
	Northumberland .. .. .	Captain Etienne.
	Pelletier .. .. .	Captain Bevard.
	Tourville .. .. .	Captain Langlois.
	Tyrannicide .. .. .	Captain Dordelin.
	Vengeur .. .. .	Captain Renaudin.
	Patriote .. .. .	Captain Currand.

Of these French ships the Indomptable and Mont Blanc were not in the final battle. The Indomptable had been crippled on the 28th, and the Mont Blanc escorted her to Rochefort. But on the evening of the 31st their places were more than filled by the Sans Pareil, Trajan, Téméraire and Trente-un Mai ; which would seem to raise the French numbers to twenty-eight. From the log of the Queen Charlotte it seems certain, however, that they had only twenty-six ships in the battle. If so, it is impossible to say what ships of the above list were absent, but two must have been.

fog of unusual thickness, though the bells and drums, which his own ship kept sounding as fog-signals, were distinctly heard by the Frenchmen. The same day the French fleet was joined by the *Patriote*, 74, which made the two fleets exactly equal in numbers, though in every other respect the advantage was decidedly in favour of the French. In the total number of their guns, indeed, they exceeded the British ships by only twenty, but the calibre of the French guns was, as usual, so much heavier than that of ours, that an entire broadside of their fleet outweighed a British broadside by upwards of five thousand pounds; their tonnage was larger in the same proportion, and, while their crews fell but little short of twenty thousand men, the English seamen amounted to scarcely more than seventeen thousand. And, as this real difference between fleets and ships nominally equal was not accidental, but proceeded from the different system of building and equipping their vessels uniformly adopted in the navies of the two nations, it should be kept in mind by every one who would fairly estimate the valour and superior skill displayed by our seamen throughout the entire period of this eventful war.

For more than a week the two fleets were moving about on the north-western edge of the Bay of Biscay, dodging one another, capturing and recapturing trading-vessels, and receiving continued intelligence of each other's position, without meeting; till at last, very early in the morning of the 28th, when the British were in  $47^{\circ} 34'$  N. lat., and  $13^{\circ} 39'$  W. long., the look-out frigates signalled that the enemy were in sight to windward. A fresh breeze was blowing from the south-west, and the sea was very rough. They had caught sight of us about the same time, and by nine o'clock they were seen plainly bearing down under a press of sail to fight, according to the positive orders which had been laid on the French Admiral. Presently they shortened sail, lay to, and formed a line of battle

ahead on the larboard tack. Howe, having first signalled to prepare for battle, wore the fleet in succession, and having thus come to on the same tack as the French, stood towards them in two columns, having on the weather-quarter a small advanced squadron of our four seventy-fours, the Russell, Marlborough, Thunderer, and Bellerophon. Presently the French began to tack, and seemed inclined to retreat. Howe ordered a general chase, and, between two and three o'clock, the Russell, which was the first to overtake the enemy, began to exchange shots with the French rear, and towards evening the Bellerophon began to bring one, the Revolutionnaire, 110, to closer action. The Bellerophon, however, soon lost her maintopmast, and the engagement with this great three-decker was gallantly taken up by the Audacious, 74, who (supported, indeed, occasionally, by the Leviathan, 74, and by the Russell) fought her for three hours with a gallantry and skill that excited the admiration of the whole fleet. After a combat which lasted nearly three hours, the Revolutionnaire, having had her mizenmast carried away, having received great damage in her yards, and having lost four hundred men, nearly fell on board the Audacious; but the little seventy-four skilfully disentangled herself, and, as the two ships got clear of one another, the British sailors gave a loud cheer, believing that the enemy had struck. The crews of some of our other ships afterwards confirmed the assertion that she had done so. And apparently Howe himself thought so too, since he signalled to the Thunderer to take possession of her; but, in the dark, his signal was not seen or not understood: and, as at daybreak the next morning the Revolutionnaire was seen completely dismasted, the French Admiral sent down a seventy-four and a frigate to protect her and take her in tow, and she was conducted in safety to Rochefort. The Audacious also was so severely crippled by the unequal encounter in which she had engaged that, though she required no protection to secure her from

capture, she was unable to take any part in the subsequent action, and returned to Plymouth to repair her damages.

The next morning, since the two fleets were still as near one another as they had been at the close of the preceding day, Howe entertained sanguine hopes of bringing the enemy to a decisive battle. He again put the fleet on the larboard tack, in the hope of ensuring such a result by attacking their rear; and as the leading ships of the French wore, and stood towards him, apparently with the idea that it might be possible to cripple his van before the other squadrons could come up, he brought up the centre to its support, at the same time making a signal to the leading ship, the *Cæsar*, to carry more sail, and to keep closer to the wind; an order which, by some mistake or for some unknown reason, was disregarded. The *Cæsar*'s disobedience to this signal forced the centre and rear of the fleet to shorten sail, threw the line of battle into some confusion, and drove the *Queen Charlotte* herself to leeward. Howe's plan was somewhat disconcerted by this unexpected disorder, but he remedied it by first causing the fleet to tack in succession, with the intention of passing through the enemy's line, and about one o'clock set the example himself, cutting the French fleet between the fifth and sixth ship from the rear; and, as soon as he had done so, putting the *Queen Charlotte* again on the larboard tack, in order to renew the action to windward. By a second mistake only two ships, the *Bellerophon* and the *Leviathan*, supported him; the rest of the ships which were near enough to produce any effect following the *Cæsar* along the enemy's line.

The movements of the *Cæsar* were attributed by Villaret Joyeuse to the heavy fire of his own van; but still, as his rear was manifestly in danger, with one or two ships nearly disabled in the desultory action which, as yet, was all that had taken place, he caused the whole French fleet to wear in succession, and, though a somewhat similar accident to that which had disconcerted Lord Howe's manœuvre also prevented his signal from being



fully obeyed, he succeeded in saving his own ships, and at the same time threatened our Royal George and Queen in a manner which compelled Howe himself, with all the ships which he could collect in a hurry, to bear down to their assistance. The larger half of our fleet had as yet not fired a gun; but the French Admiral, who, having the weather-gage, had alone the option of making the engagement more general, showed clearly that he was disinclined to do so. And about five o'clock the firing on both sides ceased, and the two fleets began to occupy themselves in repairing damages.

The next day was one of fog, at times so dense that no British ship could see the comrade nearest to her; and at times clearing off sufficiently to afford glimpses of the motions of the enemy, and to allow our Admiral to take measures for keeping them in sight. When, on the 31st, the fog entirely cleared off, he was surprised to see that none of the French ships bore signs of injury from the sharp, though short, action of the 29th. It was subsequently ascertained that M. de Nielly had joined them with four fresh ships, and that, finding himself thus strengthened, Villaret Joyeuse had sent those vessels which had been most crippled back to Brest.

During these days the two fleets had dropped a little to the westward, and the course of their evolutions, coupled with a slight shift in the wind, which now came from the south-west, had given Howe the weather-gage. Villaret Joyeuse consequently expected an instant attack; but, as he could hardly have been brought to action on the 31st till late in the afternoon, Howe, thinking that he had a full day's work before him, and desirous to avoid the confusion of an action in the dark, abstained from any forward movement that evening, contenting himself with keeping his own fleet close together, and at the same time sending some of his frigates to leeward, to prevent the enemy from availing himself of the cover of the night to

weather him. The French mistook our avoidance of an engagement, and attributed it to fear of them ; and were confirmed in their idea when, at daybreak the next morning, the British fleet was seen three or four miles to windward under easy sail, moving in a parallel direction to theirs rather than towards it. It happened that on board the *Sans Pareil* was a British officer, Captain Troubridge, destined within a short period to rise to great eminence in his profession, but at this moment a prisoner to Admiral de Nielly. As Captain of the *Castor*, 32, he had been convoying a small flotilla of merchantmen from Newfoundland, when he had fallen in with De Nielly and a squadron of ships of the line, to whom of course he could offer no resistance ; and now, as a prisoner in the hands of the French, he was casting a wistful glance at the British fleet, hoping, no doubt, for the deliverance which, before the close of the day, it wrought for him. The officers of the *Sans Pareil* pointed out to him the course his countrymen were taking, taunting him with it, as a proof that their Admiral had not the courage to come down and fight. Troubridge knew him and his captains better. "Don't you flatter yourselves," he replied to the Frenchmen ; "John Bull does not like fighting on an empty stomach, but see if he does not pay you a visit after breakfast."

The prophecy was fulfilled. Even before the English sailors went to breakfast, Lord Howe signalled that he intended to attack the enemy, passing through their line, and engaging them to leeward. And, about a quarter-past eight another signal was made from the flagship, ordering each ship to steer straight for that opposed to her in the enemy's line, and at the same time some changes were made in the position of our different ships that they might so correspond to the arrangement in the enemy's line, that three-deckers might be opposed to three-deckers, and our seventy-fours to ships which at least did not exceed them

in the number of their guns, however they might do so in tonnage, crew, and weight of metal. These alterations necessarily took up some time ; and when they were completed, the British fleet bore down under easy sail. As they approached, the French opened their fire upon the British van, especially upon the *Defence*, who on this day held the proud position of the leading ship, and gallantly maintained it, though not without receiving severe damage ; but, while admiring her gallantry, the Admiral had the mortification of perceiving the *Cæsar*, the *Russell*, and one or two others backing their maintopsails, and showing an evident disinclination to draw closer to the enemy than necessity compelled. Still, in spite of this disappointment, the *Queen Charlotte* pressed vigorously forward, replying with her quarterdeck guns to the fire of some of the French ships which assailed her as she advanced ; but reserving the fire of her maindeck for the French Admiral himself, whom she had singled out as her especial antagonist. So close and compact, however, was the French line that it seemed no easy matter to force a passage through it, and, in fact, as the *Queen Charlotte* came under the stern of the *Montagne*, pouring in a tremendous fire from her starboard guns, and passing so close that the rigging of the two vessels touched for a moment, the *Jacobin*, the vessel which had been a-stern of the *Montagne*, moved a-head to avoid a similar fire from her other broadside, and took up by this movement the very position which the *Queen Charlotte* had intended to occupy. The *Queen Charlotte*, however, luffed up ; and, though in so doing she nearly became entangled with the *Jacobin*, she soon cleared herself, and engaged both her and the *Montagne* with a cannonade so rapid and true, that they both drew out of the line and bore away. Howe at once made the signal for a general chase, and was preparing to lead it himself, when his fore- and main-topmasts both went over the side ; he was compelled to remain where he was, and

to content himself with commencing an attack on the *Juste*, the second ship a-head of the *Montagne*, which he soon disabled. And then, having by admirable seamanship contrived to wear the *Queen Charlotte*, he called some of his soundest ships around him, and bore off to aid the *Queen*, who had been taking a gallant part in the battle, and was now lying almost helpless : while the *Montagne*, which, after her escape from the *Queen Charlotte*, had also been joined by some of her consorts, was apparently preparing to attack and overwhelm her. The French Admiral, however, when he saw this manœuvre of his former antagonist, would not risk a second encounter with him ; but again made sail, preferring to turn his attention to the protection of five of his own ships, which were lying apart from the main body of the combatants, utterly disabled. For throughout the two fleets, though every ship did not behave equally well, the battle had been raging with great fury : and, though it had not lasted more than two hours, eleven or twelve French ships were dismasted, and an almost equal number of ours had received serious, though inferior, damage. For two hours more a languid and for the most part ineffective cannonade was kept up, and it was not till the firing had ceased that it was clearly seen which side had won the victory. For up to that time, all the French ships had kept their colours flying ; but now seven were seen to be so wholly unmanageable and helpless, that we took possession of them one after another, without their being able to offer any resistance. One of them indeed, *Le Vengeur*, was so riddled by our shot, that the British flag had hardly been hoisted on her, when she went down and nearly two hundred of her crew perished in her. The others, *L'Achille*, *L'Amerique*, *L'Impetueux*, *Le Juste*, *Le Northumberland*, and *Le Sans Pareil*, remained to grace the triumph of the conquerors ; and most of them were afterwards added to the British navy.

Besides the seven thus captured, five others, *Le Je-*



mappe, Le Mucius, Le Republicain, Le Scipion, Le Tourville, were equally disabled ; and great discontent was felt throughout the fleet at the conduct of the Admiral in taking no steps to secure them also. The Montagne, now in full flight, had ceased to afford them her protection, and they were slowly making off, three under spritsails and two in tow of different frigates. The general feeling was that the slightest exertion on our part would have added them to the list of prizes. But the signal for discontinuing the battle had been made, and remained unaltered, and the crippled Frenchmen at last rejoined their flying comrades without further molestation. Lord Howe in his private journal\* accounts for his mercy towards them by the fact that his ships were "either so much dispersed or disabled in their masts and rigging, as to be prevented from opposing the escape of those French ships, or of assembling in force to renew the engagement." But this explanation is to some extent invalidated by the report made by the captain of the fleet, Sir Roger Curtis, to the First Lord of the Admiralty, which described fourteen of our ships "as not much damaged," and only nine of the French as "capable of making an effort to protect their dismasted ships." And, moreover, it does not appear to have been in accordance with the view at first entertained by Lord Howe himself, whom Captain Stopford, on going on board the Queen Charlotte for orders, found strenuously endeavouring to repair her damages, in order to renew the action ; and who was only dissuaded from so doing by Curtis himself, who had taken some sudden, and, in Stopford's opinion, incomprehensible alarm at the movements of a single French ship. That more might have been done seems established beyond the possibility of question : and again, perhaps, none of those who have expressly condemned Lord Howe for his remissness, press as hardly on him as his

\* Given at length in Barrow's 'Life,' pp. 226-235 ; compare p. 252, and also pp. 256, 257.

professed apologist, when he is reduced to defend him by the argument, that "the beneficial effect to the country was pretty much the same whether seven or twelve of the enemy's ships had been taken."\* It will be more merciful and, probably, far more in accordance with the truth, to adopt his other explanation that "Lord Howe, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, after five or six days' and nights' fatigue, weakened in body and mind, after so much exertion and anxiety," had no longer energy sufficient fully to follow up the advantages which his skill in conducting the earlier operations of the fleet had secured for him. We ventured to account for the remissness with which, in a slighter degree, he was charged at Gibraltar twelve years before, by a somewhat similar argument: and if such causes had any effect whatever then, they must clearly have had a much greater force now. A naval campaign does not, indeed, cause such personal fatigue to a commander-in-chief as one on land: still, as a general rule, it is only from men in the prime of life that great deeds in war can be fairly expected; and though there are many remarkable exceptions to this rule, it ought never to be forgotten that they are exceptions; and that to entrust arduous commands to old men is as unfair to themselves and their reputation, as it is to their country.

After all, it was an important victory, and it had been gained with a comparatively trivial sacrifice of life: our killed did not amount to three hundred, nor our wounded to nine hundred, a number smaller than that of those who fell in the prizes alone, and probably not amounting to one-sixth of the sufferers in the whole French fleet. And whatever may have been the feeling among the sailors, there was no alloy to the exultation with which the intelligence of the victory was received by the country in general. The people, as they cheered the fleet returning to Spithead with its prizes, saw only the trophies that

\* Barrow's 'Life,' pp. 257 and 297.

had been actually won ; and the King, who had long felt a strong attachment to Lord Howe, from contrasting his conduct with that of Keppel in the American war, shared in the general enthusiasm, travelled down to Portsmouth, and, accompanied by a splendid retinue, in which ministers of state were mingled with a large military and naval staff, went on board the *Queen Charlotte* ; presented the Admiral with a sword set with diamonds, distributed gold chains and medals among several of the inferior officers, offered Lord Howe a marquissate, conferred peerages on Admiral Graves and Sir Alexander Hood, who became Lord Graves and Lord Bridport ; gave a large present of money to the crews of the *Queen Charlotte* and *Aquilon* frigate, and rewarded the whole fleet with an extensive naval promotion.

Another circumstance which gave rise to partial dissatisfaction, was the selection made by the Commander-in-chief of the names of those officers whom he pointed out in his report to the Admiralty, as meriting a “ particular claim to his attention,” and who were in consequence selected by the authorities as the only recipients of the medals given in honour of the victory. The charge that the officers thus praised and rewarded had been picked out without much care or discrimination, seemed corroborated by the fact that Collingwood of the *Barfleur*, one of the most distinguished of all the captains in general reputation, and one whose abilities had been especially displayed on this occasion, since Admiral Bowyer had been severely wounded early in the day, after which the whole command of the ship had consequently devolved upon him, was passed over, and received neither favorable mention nor medal. The latter, indeed, he did obtain at a later period ; for, having distinguished himself still more brilliantly in the victory of St. Vincent, he, with the marked approval of his commander, refused the medal offered him for his splendid conduct in that battle, lest, by accepting it, he should seem to acquiesce in the justice of the neglect he had experienced in this instance. The reasonableness of

his refusal was admitted, as well as the gallantry of his behaviour on the 1st of June, and both medals were given him ; but he always felt resentment against Lord Howe for the omission of his name, and confessed an exultation at seeing his victory eclipsed, as he considered that it had been, by that of Sir John Jervis. It must unfortunately be added that some of the captains who were passed over could not make the same complaint as Collingwood. Captain Molloy, of the *Cæsar*, was brought to a court-martial and dismissed from the command of his ship; and the general opinion was that one or two others were even more culpable than he; but, as has happened on other occasions, the authorities at the Admiralty were unwilling to check the general exultation and confidence which the victory had inspired, by making public their dissatisfaction with any of their officers ; and, had not Captain Molloy himself courted a trial, even he would have been allowed to conceal, and, it may be (since his misconduct was not attributed by the judges who condemned him to a want of courage), to retrieve his error.

For a moment there appeared reason to hope that another fleet might complete the victory of the 1st of June by the capture of the crippled ships. Admiral Montague, having, according to his orders, escorted his convoy to the latitude of Cape Finisterre, returned to Plymouth, and was at once sent out again to endeavour to intercept the great French convoy known to be on its way from America. Before he sailed on this fresh expedition, the *Audacious* also arrived at Plymouth to repair the damage which she had received on the 28th of May : and, having learnt from her that an action had already taken place between the British and French fleets, and that, as they remained close together, a more decisive battle was expected, Montague had now a second object to attend to, if he missed the first ; being enjoined also to keep a look-out for Lord Howe, so as, if a great battle had taken place, to be able to aid any of our own ships that might be disabled, or to



capture any French ships which, though damaged, might have escaped. He did miss the first object, since the vast fleet of merchantmen, eluding all the squadrons which were in search of it, reached its harbour in safety. But he fell in with the remainder of Villaret Joyeuse's fleet, though it was in too compact order for him to be able to make any impression on it; and before he met it, he encountered another fleet, which, had it not unluckily been too near its own harbours, would have afforded him an opportunity of distinguishing himself by a conflict with a pretty equal antagonist. His own force, with which on the evening of the 4th of June he quitted the Sound, consisted of eight seventy-fours, one sixty-four, and two frigates; with these ships, on the afternoon of the 8th, he came up with a squadron under Admiral Cornice, consisting of one 110-gun ship, seven seventy-fours, two large frigates, a corvette and a cutter. He at once gave chase, but they fled, and took refuge in the Bay of Bertheaume, where they were joined by two more ships of the line already lying there.

Hoping that they might come out the next day, he watched them that night at an easy distance from the shore: but, early on the 9th, a fresh fleet was seen coming towards him, which was soon discovered to consist of nineteen sail of the line besides frigates, and which was in fact the fleet which had fought Howe on the 1st of June; fourteen of them appeared in good condition, the other five, the ships mentioned in the account already given of the battle as being wholly disabled, were towed along by their comrades. Montague formed his fleet in a line of battle a-head; but it was rather with the intention of securing his safety by assuming a bold appearance, than of fighting, which, considering the numbers of the enemy in front and the neighbourhood of the other fleet in Bertheaume Bay, would have been madness. Though preserving his line of battle he bore away slowly (for some

of his ships sailed very ill), but steadily : and though Villaret Joyeuse gave chase for a short time, out of regard for his crippled ships he could not venture to persevere in it. Montague made one more effort to join Lord Howe, and, failing in it, returned to Plymouth, which he reached the next day with one squadron of the victorious fleet, the rest having proceeded with the prizes to Spithead. Lord Howe, at the head of a still larger fleet than before, made more than one cruise towards the French coast, before the end of the year ; but he found no opportunity of fighting another battle. The French fleet had been too much cowed, and indeed too much injured, to be in a hurry again to leave Brest while he was in the neighbourhood ; at the end of November he returned to Spithead for the winter. His health was breaking, and though for a few weeks in the following year he once more put to sea in search of the French fleet, he was unable to find it, and his warlike career may be looked upon as terminated with the first of June. Once after that time, in a moment of unlooked-for disgrace and danger, he was called forth, not to lead his old comrades to victory, but to save his country from the effects of their insubordination and revolt ; and by his wise, moderate, and equitable counsels, aided by his well-earned character for honesty and truth, was able to do his country a service as essential to her, and as glorious to himself, as the greatest victory over the most redoubtable enemy.

But, if the great Channel fleet could find nothing to do, the small squadrons which issued from the ports of the two countries were both active and effective ; though here, also, the advantage greatly preponderated in our favour. The only success gained by a French force of this kind was obtained by a squadron under M. de Nielly, whom we have already mentioned as having taken the *Castor* and a number of merchantmen under its escort, a few days before the battle of the 1st of June. At the beginning

of the winter of 1794 M. de Nielly was cruising near the Scilly Isles with five sail of the line, three frigates, and a corvette, when he fell in with two British 74-gun ships, the *Canada* and the *Alexander*. In their endeavour to escape from a force so overwhelming, the two British ships separated for a moment, and the French by their manœuvres prevented them from re-uniting; the *Canada* outsailed her pursuers, and reached Plymouth in safety: but the *Alexander*, most skilfully handled by her commander, Captain Bligh, for three hours sustained a most courageous conflict with three of the French ships, inflicting on them a loss of four hundred and fifty men killed or wounded, while her own loss did not exceed forty; nor did she surrender till all the rest of the hostile squadron began to close around her.

Some months before, an English squadron of three frigates, one carrying thirty-six guns, one thirty-two, and one twenty-four, under the command of Sir James Saumarez, an officer who had already won a high reputation which he was destined greatly to augment in the course of the war, fell in with a French squadron consisting of two large 50-gun ships, made out of seventy-fours which had been cut down, two 36-gun frigates, and a brig. Before such a force the utmost for which Saumarez could hope was safety; and he secured it for all his ships. By his orders the *Eurydice*, 24, Captain Cole, set all sail for Guernsey, while he, and his remaining consort, the *Druid*, 32, Captain Elliston, kept the pursuers at bay. When the *Eurydice* was safe, he bade the *Druid* leave him and make off, while he himself, in the *Crescent*, hauled his wind and stood along the enemy's line. Then, when he had diverted their attention from the others, and drawn it wholly on himself, he ran the *Crescent* through a narrow passage between the island and some projecting reefs, where no ship of war was known to have passed before, and where none of his pursuers dared to follow

him, and anchored in perfect security in Guernsey Roads.

Thethus putting this squadron to flight and the capture of the *Alexander* were but an inadequate set-off for the loss experienced by the enemy in their encounters with Sir John Warren and Sir Edward Pellew. In April, at no great distance from the ground where Saumarez met his antagonists, Warren in the *Flora*, 36, with the *Arethusa*, 38, Sir E. Pellew, the *Concorde*, 36, Sir R. Strachan, the *Melampus*, 38, Captain Wells, and the *Nymphe*, 36, Captain G. Murray, fell in with a French squadron consisting of the *Pomone*, 40, the *Engageante* and *Resolue*, 36, and the *Babet*, a 20-gun corvette. A smart action ensued, in which he took them all except the *Resolue*, which, though greatly crippled, escaped into Morlaix. Four months later the same officer commanded a somewhat larger squadron, of which the *Arethusa* still made one, while the others were the *Diamond*, 38, under the command of Sir Sydney Smith, of whom we have already made mention in connection with the destruction of the ships at Toulon, and who will more than once demand our notice in future years, the *Artois*, 38, Sir Edmund Nagle, the *Diana*, 38, Captain Faulknor, and the *Santa Margarita*, 36, Captain Eliab Harvey; with these he fell in with a French 36-gun frigate and two corvettes; drove them all ashore, the frigate near the Penmarks, where she soon went to pieces, and the corvettes in the Bay of Audierne, where, in spite of the protection afforded them by three batteries, the *Flora* and *Diamond* attacked them with such vigour that their crews deserted them, and their masts were shot away. Warren was unable to bring them off, but he did not quit them till he believed them to be wrecked beyond all possibility of recovery: and, though in this he was partly mistaken, since the French did succeed in saving the *Espion*; yet the whole affair was very advantageous to us, and very creditable to the crews



of the two frigates who thus bearded the batteries on shore. A part of the same squadron, the *Arethusa*, *Artois*, and *Diamond* with the addition of the *Galatea*, 32, under Captain R. Keats, shortly afterwards fell in with a single French frigate, the *Revolutionnaire*, 44. She was one of the best ships of her class that the enemy possessed, and had such speed that she outsailed all the British ships except the *Artois*, which though of a force inferior in every respect, fought her with great spirit for nearly three-quarters of an hour, and captured her before any of the rest of the squadron could come near enough to take a share in the action. On the whole the preponderance of success in the naval engagements which took place in these the two first years of the war, was greatly and decisively in our favour; since, in addition to the important loss inflicted on the fleets of the enemy by Lord Hood at Toulon, and by Lord Howe on the 1st of June, we captured no fewer than eighteen frigates; while our losses were limited to one ship of the line, four frigates, one of which, the *Castor*, was soon re-captured, and a few 16 and 14-gun brigs.

Nor were the advantages which, at the commencement of the war, we obtained from our naval pre-eminence confined to the capture of ships. As in the former war, the West Indies again became the scene of several enterprises, the success of which was not only creditable to our valour, but was also important from the great commercial value of the permanent conquests thus effected. And though, where the enemy made any vigorous resistance, it was generally subdued rather by the military force which co-operated with our squadrons than by the efforts of the sailors, this was not invariably the case; and, even where it was, there can be no doubt that the presence of our fleets, by cutting off all hope of succour, had a great effect in persuading the garrisons to a more speedy submission than they might have made had the sea been open to their

cruisers. In the north the valuable fishing-islands of Miquelon and St. Pierre, which had been reduced by us in the American war, and had been restored at the peace, were recovered without a struggle. Tobago was reduced after an attack of two hours. But our first attempt to possess ourselves of the rich island of Martinique was less successful. The belief that, among the French inhabitants, a large party existed so attached to the ancient monarchy of their country that they would be inclined to welcome us as deliverers rather than to resist us as enemies, induced Admiral Gardner to undertake the enterprise with very inadequate means. Four ships of the line and a body of troops, not amounting to two thousand, and of whom scarcely more than one-half were British soldiers, composed the whole force. The troops were landed without difficulty, but, when they proceeded to attack the town of St. Pierre, where the fortifications had been strengthened since the last war, and which was defended by a powerful garrison under General Rochambeau, the governor of the island, they were entirely discomfited. Unfortunately the post of honour in the attack was entrusted to a brigade of French Royalists in our service, who fell into entire confusion: speaking the same language as the garrison they mistook some of their own comrades for enemies, fired on them, and having severely wounded their own commander, retired with precipitation to our ships. Major General Bruce, the commander-in-chief of the troops, having thus learnt the entire inutility of half his army, decided on relinquishing the attempt; and the whole force returned to Barbadoes.

The next year the attempt was renewed with better success. A well-appointed force of 7000 men was sent out from England under Sir Charles Grey, while Sir John Jervis in the *Boyne*, 98, arrived to take the command of the fleet, which was raised to four sail of the line and thirteen frigates. And the reduction of all the French

Caribbee islands was enjoined on the two commanders as their especial object. The expedition reached the West Indies in the first week of January, 1794; and, having spent a month at Barbadoes in hastening those further preparations which could only be made in the neighbourhood, at the beginning of February it sailed for Martinique, reached it on the 5th, and at once commenced operations. They were most gallant and successful: but what perhaps gives them more interest at the present day than they otherwise would have, is the circumstance that, of the three brigades into which the land-force was divided, one was commanded by Prince Edward, the fourth son of the King, and the father of her present Most Gracious Majesty; who, in one or two attacks on the enemy's works, which he led in person, displayed the most dashing courage, and, for his early age, no inconsiderable military skill.

The present work, however, is only concerned with the exploits of the fleet, which in this instance bore its full share in the triumph of the combined force. The seamen here, as in Corsica, were also employed on shore, and in the performance of similar duties: co-operating with the soldiers in the making of roads, and the construction of batteries; and by themselves dragging guns and mortars up heights which to landmen appeared wholly inaccessible. One body also, without waiting for the support of the soldiers, stormed the strong and important post of Mont Maturin; another seized on the heights of Sourrière, and, having dragged some 24-pounder guns and mortars up an ascent which a mule could scarcely climb, erected, manned and worked the battery which commanded Fort Bourbon, one of the strongest positions in Martinique, and by the capture of that fort greatly contributed to the reduction of that part of the whole island. The success of this enterprise encouraged the commanders to decide on the immediate attack of Fort Royal, which the ships

were to assault in front ; while the army, with a few field-pieces, advanced against the back of the town, along the side of the hill under Fort Bourbon. The attack by sea was placed under the immediate direction of Commodore Thompson of the *Vengeance*, 74, under whom Captain Nugent of the *Veteran*, 64, Captain Riou of the *Rose* frigate, (the same officer who afterwards fell so gallantly at Copenhagen), Captain Brown of the *Asia*, 64, and Captain Faulknor of the *Zebra* sloop, the smallest vessel employed in the whole expedition, had the chief commands. The men who were to land were to be led by Nugent and Riou : and, while they stormed this side of the town, the *Asia* and *Zebra* were to enter Carenage Bay, and draw off a part of the attention of the enemy from them by keeping up a heavy fire on Fort Louis. The different attacks were skilfully arranged, and were carried out with such spirit that, though the plan, as originally settled, was baffled in one important particular, the very disappointment led to as complete a success as could have been obtained from its most precise fulfilment, and to an exhibition of such intrepid daring as is rare even in the annals of the British Navy. The *Asia*, having trusted to a French pilot to conduct her into the bay, through his timidity or reluctance missed the entrance : on which Captain Faulknor, in the little *Zebra*, ran her by herself under the fort ; and, as the small 4-pounders which constituted her armament could make no impression on the strong stone walls, in spite of a storm of grapeshot, he leaped overboard at the head of the greater part of his crew, and joined the boats'-crews under Nugent and Riou. The fort was taken, and received the name of Fort Edward, in honour of the royal prince who was present on the land-side of the town ; while Faulknor was rewarded by the command of the *Bienvenue* frigate, which lay in the harbour, and which falling into our hands as one of the fruits of our victory, had her name changed to the Un-



daunted, and under that appellation was added to the navy. After this success Jervis detached Captain Nugent with a small squadron against the town of St. Pierre, which soon submitted; and, by the 23rd of March, General Rochambeau perceived all further resistance to be useless. His garrison was reduced to two hundred soldiers; while our entire loss from the day of our first arrival did not, in the killed and wounded of both soldiers and sailors, exceed seventy or eighty men.

From Martinique the combined forces proceeded against Sainte Lucie: that island was taken in three days, during which, though several of the French outposts were stormed we did not lose a single man; and, at the end of the first week in April, the squadron sailed against Guadaloupe. Here again a great part of the work fell on the seamen, and Lord Garlies of the *Winchelsea*, 32, particularly distinguished himself, placing his ship within half-musketshot of some heavy batteries in Gosier Bay, and silencing them by his fire without a man on board the *Winchelsea* being wounded, but himself. Captain Faulknor, also with a party of sailors, joined in the storm of the strong post of Fleur d'Epée. On the fall of this fort, Grande Terre, the principal town in the island, capitulated; the other strongholds surrendered after but little resistance; and in less than a fortnight the whole of Guadaloupe, with all its dependencies, such as the islands of Marie Galante, Desirade, and Les Saintes, submitted. They did not, however, remain long in our possession. Six weeks afterwards the small garrison which had been left in Fleur d'Epée was surprised and overpowered by a French squadron accompanied by a land-force of nearly fifteen hundred soldiers. On hearing of its recapture, Jervis and Grey at once returned, but they were unable to effect anything. They found the French squadron too strongly posted in Carenage Bay to make an attack on it advisable: and, though they landed some troops

and seamen, who exerted themselves with all their former gallantry, the enemy, now in greater force than before, repelled them with severe loss. A further reinforcement from France soon arrived; while the yellow fever attacked the British troops. Six months of almost daily battle only served to establish the French superiority in the island; and, on the 10th of December, it was decided to withdraw our men. One detachment of a hundred and twenty-five men, under a brigadier-general, had been forced to surrender above two months before; but the remainder, amounting now to no more than six hundred and twenty-one officers and men, were, chiefly by the skill of Captain Bowen of the *Terpsichore* frigate, safely embarked and conveyed to Martinique. A vigorous and successful attack had also been commenced in the year 1793, and was continued during this year on the French posts in the great island of San Domingo; but it will be more convenient to speak of them hereafter, when we arrive at the time when we concluded our operations in that unfortunate island. We must now return to Europe, where the war was rapidly assuming more formidable proportions: the successes of France on land more than counterbalancing our triumphs on the sea; and augmenting the number of our enemies, to an extent that the governors of the Republic expected would ensure our subjection, but which in the end only added to the number and brilliancy of our triumphs.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1795.

Holland makes a treaty with France—The Brest fleet puts to sea, and loses some ships in a storm—Sir S. Smith reconnoitres Brest—Admiral Hotham commands in the Mediterranean—Engages with the French fleet—Nelson's great skill and courage—Admiral Hotham's incompetency—He again encounters the enemy—Comparison between him and Sir. H. Burrard—The Censeur is recaptured, with a number of merchantmen—Nelson at Genoa—Admiral Cornwallis escapes from M. Villaret Joyeuse—Lord Bridport's action—His incompetency as a Commander-in-chief—Unfortunate results of Sir J. Warren's expedition—Admiral Duncan commands the North fleet—Capture of the Cape of Good Hope, Trincomalee, Malacca, &c.—The French recover Sainte Lucie and other islands in the West Indies—Capture of the Pique, Gloire and Minerve.

At the beginning of the year 1795 France entered upon the war, as far as we were concerned, with advantages which she had not hitherto enjoyed. She had not only made peace with Prussia, thus relieving herself of one powerful military foe, but she had also reduced Holland to submission, and to the acceptance of a treaty dictated at Paris, the effect of which was to place at her disposal a Dutch fleet of nearly one hundred and twenty vessels of different classes, and a body of sailors inured from childhood to the sea, and encouraged by the recollection that they had never been found inferior to those of any nation but our own, and that they had more than once threatened even the English shores, making Britain herself tremble for her maritime supremacy. Against these advantages obtained by our enemy we had nothing to put in the balance but an alliance offensive and defensive, which in February we concluded with Austria and Russia; the first-mentioned of which powers had no navy whatever

with which to assist us, while the latter was too much occupied with securing the advantages for which she looked from the recent second partition of Poland to contribute more than a small squadron to co-operate with us in the North Sea, where, in fact, we had no opportunity of striking a blow during the whole year.

France made the first move in the new campaign, even before the close of the year 1794; for, about Christmas-day, M. Villaret Joyeuse, whose disaster on the 1st of June had in no respect shaken the confidence which his masters reposed in him, quitted Brest with thirty-five sail of the line, and an almost equal number of frigates, corvettes, and smaller vessels; and though, before he got clear of the harbour, he encountered a violent gale, in which one of his three-deckers was lost, and some of his other ships were severely shaken, he again put to sea on the last day of the year, to lose several more ships in another gale, and to be again driven back to Brest at the beginning of February, with a great proportion even of those ships which had triumphed over the storm in a most leaky and dangerous condition. In his month's cruise, however, he had taken a great number of British traders of different sizes, and one small frigate, the *Daphne*; so that, though he had lost five sail of the line, and had had others so much strained and injured as to be almost incapable of future service, he was not without a fair pretext for representing the advantages which he had obtained as far outweighing his losses; and his countrymen, who saw the prizes which he brought in, and did not see their own ships which had gone to the bottom, eagerly believed his boast, and placed greater reliance than ever in so confident and successful a commander.

Lord Howe still commanded the Channel fleet of Great Britain; and having received intelligence, in the first week of the new year, of the sailing of M. Villaret Joyeuse, he despatched Sir John B. Warren, still captain of the



Flora, with two more of his flying squadron of frigates, the *Arethusa* and *Diamond*, under their old captains, Sir Edward Pellew and Sir Sidney Smith, to examine into the truth of the report which had reached him. He ascertained the correctness of his information through a very singular and admirable exertion of skill, courage, and presence of mind displayed by one of those officers. On his arrival off Brest, Warren sent forward the *Diamond* to reconnoitre the harbour, and Sir Sidney, hoisting French colours and disguising his ship as well as he could, at once stood in towards the entrance, not at all daunted by the circumstance that two French ships of the line and a frigate were at the same time making for the same point. With consummate coolness he anchored between the headlands *Pointe St. Mathieu* and *Bec du Raz*; and, when the flood-tide set in, he again weighed anchor and continued beating in, tacking and manœuvring his ship, and venturing even, as he passed close under a line-of-battle ship under jury-masts, which was lying at anchor in his path, to hail her in French, and ask if she wanted any assistance. By this time he had fully ascertained that there was no great fleet in the harbour; but he had also awakened the suspicions of one or two French frigates in the roads, whose private signals he had failed to answer. However he had now got all he wanted, and before the French captains could decide on what to think of his ship, or on what course they should adopt, the *Diamond* had gone round, and was making her way out again with an ebb-tide and a fair wind. The *Arethusa* stood in as far as she could to meet and support her in case she needed assistance, but nothing molested her; and, after a cruise of upwards of twenty hours among a host of enemies, she rejoined her consorts in safety, bringing with her accurate intelligence of the force still in the harbour and of the condition of every ship which composed it.

The information, however, thus gallantly procured, led

to no immediate results, and again the first blows were struck in the Mediterranean; if, indeed, that could be called a blow which, though it certainly inflicted some injury on the hostile fleets, and displayed in an eminent degree the courage and professional skill of some of the British captains, at the same time exhibited the want of energy and capacity in our Commander-in-chief in a most conspicuous light. And, in a somewhat slighter degree, the same observation may be applied to the operations of our Channel Fleet: so that, while the events of the year 1795 supply three instances in which large fleets were brought to action, and in each of which French ships were taken, so as to clothe each action with the appearance of a victory; nevertheless, the circumstances under which each engagement was terminated were such as to damage rather than to enhance the reputation of the British Admirals, and to cause shame rather than exultation to any historian solicitous for the honour of his country, and for the glory of her navy as one of the chief pillars on which that honour rests. It affords a singular contrast to them, and to the general character of our naval annals, that the one exploit performed this year by a British fleet on which the mind can reflect with pride is one that consisted in the avoidance of a battle.

At the beginning of the year the commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean was Vice-Admiral Hotham, whose flag was hoisted in the *Britannia*, 100, while his second and third in command were Vice-Admiral Goodall, in the *Princess Royal*, 98, and Sir Hyde Parker, in the *St. George*, 98. The *Windsor Castle* now bore the flag of Rear-Admiral Linzee. Eight English seventy-fours, two sixty-fours, and four frigates completed the English fleet,\* to which were joined one Neapolitan ship of the line and two frigates; the ship of the line, *Il Tancredi*, 74, being

\* See note on page 414.

commanded by Prince Caraccioli, an officer whom infirmity of mind, rather than any deliberate treachery, afterwards brought to a disgraceful death. At Christmas Hotham was lying at anchor in San Fiorenzo Bay, a situation which, in the middle of January, he decided on exchanging for the Leghorn Roads ; and, at the very outset, his mismanagement lost him one of his ships of the line. A gale of wind carried away the masts of the *Berwick*, 74, (not without gross negligence on the part of some of her superior officers, who were dismissed for their misconduct by sentence of a court-martial) ; and, as the Admiral would not wait for her to repair her damages, but ordered her to follow him, she, sailing by herself to rejoin him a few weeks later, fell in with the whole French fleet, and was, of course, easily captured. The French, who had still a strong party in Corsica, had resolved on making a vigorous effort for the recovery of that important island ; with which object they embarked five thousand troops on board the Toulon fleet ; and, as soon as intelligence reached that port that the British had sailed for Leghorn, their Commander-in-chief, Admiral Martin, put to sea, and sailed for San Fiorenzo, which Hotham's movement had left open to him. His force consisted of fifteen sail of the line : one, his flagship, the *Sans Culotte*, a magnificent three-decker, carrying a hundred and twenty guns : three had eighty guns, the other eleven were all seventy-fours. They sailed from Toulon on the 3rd of March, and, on the 6th, Hotham, still at Leghorn, heard that they had been seen off the isle of Sainte Marguerite, steering for the south-east. The next morning he put to sea to encounter them, directing his course back to San Fiorenzo, in the hope of thus intercepting them before they reached Corsica ; but, receiving some fresh intelligence on his way, he slightly altered his course, bearing up towards the north-west. On the 10th he came in sight of the enemy. Had he kept on his original path, he would have missed them ; for

they, having also apparently obtained some information of his being in the neighbourhood, were making their way back to Toulon : and, now that they were met with, they did all in their power to avoid an engagement. Hotham at once made the signal to chase, but the wind was very light, at times almost falling to a calm, and the next day none of the enemy were to be seen but a single brig watching us and making signals. Dawn, however, on the 12th, showed a different sight. We were almost becalmed, and, instead of retreating as before, the French were now coming up towards us, endeavouring to separate our squadrons. Goodall made signal for the ships near the Princess Royal to form in line of battle ahead or astern of him, as might be most easy and convenient. Hotham, from the Britannia, made a similar signal. After some hours of manœuvring, the two British squadrons joined, and at a quarter past three the Britannia hung out the signal to prepare for battle. The enemy, who had also been manœuvring in a manner which gave our officers but a moderate opinion of their skill, at one time trying to form a line on the larboard tack, then moving forward with about half their fleet in a line of battle ahead, and then hauling their wind, had by this time come within about three miles of us. They advanced, however, so slowly that it was not till after five o'clock, when it was nearly dark, that they had lessened their distance to one mile ; and just at that time an easterly breeze sprang up, which, for a moment, led our officers to hope that it would carry us through their line and enable us to bring them to a decisive battle. Presently, however, the wind shifted to the opposite quarter, and began to blow freshly from the west. Daylight went down ; the British Admiral made the signal to wear, and the two fleets both stood to the southward. The next morning, the 13th, the French had increased their distance so far as to be three or four leagues from us ; which, however, did not prevent our seeing two of



their ships run foul of one another, by which accident one, the *Ca Ira*, 80, lost her main and fore topmasts.\* The wind was still fresh; Hotham again made the signal for a general chase. Nelson, in the preceding year, had affirmed and proved the *Agamemnon* to be the fastest ship of the line in the fleet, and she did not lose that character on this occasion. She soon outsailed her comrades so completely as to be some miles ahead of them. Had they been nearer she would have steered for the *Sans Culotte*, for Nelson was eager to measure her with a first-rate, though the Frenchman more than doubled her strength; but his isolated position showed him that that would be too rash a step, and accordingly he bore down on the *Ca Ira*, which had already been assailed by the *Inconstant* frigate, Captain Fremantle, who, disregarding his inferiority of size, had approached her within musket-shot, and had poured one or two broadsides into her, but had been at last compelled to sheer off, having lost many men from the *Ca Ira*'s fire, and received some shot between wind and water. As the *Agamemnon* came up the *Ca Ira* fired upon her with her stern guns, with an aim so steady and true that scarcely a shot missed her. Nelson had intended to withhold his fire till he touched her stern, but fearing lest he might be disabled before he reached her, (for the Frenchman's guns were chiefly directed at his masts and rigging), he was forced to alter his plan a little, and resolved to begin as soon as he was near enough to be certain of not throwing away his fire. Every gun was double-shotted, and when he was, as he judged, about a

\* For the account of this action, as of the transactions at Corsica in the preceding year, and of all the events in which Nelson was engaged, I am greatly indebted to his Despatches. Unfortunately they were not published till many years after even the second edition of James's '*Naval History*,' otherwise the relation of many events as given in that generally useful work would have probably been greatly altered. For instance, James makes but slight mention of the *Agamemnon* in connection with the *Ca Ira*, and none at all of her in connection with the capture of *Le Censeur*, though that ship also struck to her.

hundred yards off, he ordered the helm to be put a-starboard, his after-sails to be brailed up, and, as the *Agamemnon* fell off, he poured his whole broadside into the enemy, and had the satisfaction of seeing almost every shot tell. Before the roar of his guns had died away, the after-yards were braced up, the helm was put a-port, and another broadside was delivered with equal accuracy and effect. For full two hours he kept repeating this manœuvre, pouring broadside after broadside into the enemy, without giving her a single opportunity of returning the compliment. She did occasionally still fire her after-guns at her persevering foe; but her gunners had forgotten to alter their elevation, and her shot now passed almost harmlessly over him. A frigate came to her aid, and opened her fire also on the *Agamemnon*, but still the little English ship kept up her manœuvres and her ceaseless fire, working, as Nelson said, with as much exactness as if she had been at Spithead, till the *Sans Culotte* and one or two other French ships arrived to the rescue of the *Ca Ira*, and Hotham made the *Agamemnon*'s signal of recal. With such admirable skill had she been handled that, though her rigging had been greatly cut up, she had not one man killed, and only seven wounded; while she had reduced the *Ca Ira* to a perfect wreck, and had killed and wounded a hundred and ten of her men. There had been a little fighting in one or two other quarters, and the *Sans Culotte* herself had been so severely crippled by one or two of our ships, the *Illustrious*, Captain Frederic, taking the most conspicuous part in the attack, that she was forced to quit the fleet, and retreated to Genoa.

Nothing more was done that day, but the next morning the French were still in sight, about five miles off, the *Ca Ira* a long way to the rear, and much nearer to our fleet, in company with the *Censeur*, 74, which M. Martin had detached to protect her. Hotham again made the signal to form in line of battle, and sent two seventy-fours, the

Captain, Captain Reeves, and the Bedford, Captain Gould, against the Censeur and her companion. The Captain, being considerably ahead of the Bedford, reached them first, and was received with a heavy fire from both the Frenchmen, which did her such great and visible damage that the Admiral hailed Nelson, and desired him to go to her assistance. The order was eagerly obeyed; the Agamemnon set every sail and pressed forward, and, as others of our ships also advanced, while the French, in the hope of saving their two ships, bore towards us, there again, for a moment, seemed a hope of a general and decisive action. A few of our ships were forming a short line of battle, the Illustrious leading it; next to her was the Courageux, Captain Montgomery, who was followed by the Princess Royal, the Agamemnon, the Britannia, and the Tancredi. The Ca Ira and the Censeur were to leeward of this line; and as the advanced squadron of the enemy, led by the Tonnant, a splendid 80-gun ship, passed along it to windward, our four leading ships were placed between two fires, and were compelled to fight on both sides at once; which, as they were very short of men, was no slight addition to their difficulties. The Illustrious and Courageux each lost their main and mizen masts, but in less than two hours the Ca Ira and Censeur lost the greater part of theirs also. They struck; Nelson sent a boat on board them, and one of the Agamemnon's officers, Lieutenant Andrews, hoisted English colours on them both, and brought off their captains as prisoners. Mean time, the squadron to windward, seeing their fate, bore off, and the action terminated.

There certainly was no reason why we should have allowed it to be brought to so speedy a conclusion. Two only of our ships were much crippled, and the French fleet was diminished in the same proportion. Nelson at once went on board the Britannia, and urged the Admiral to leave the Illustrious and Courageux and the fri-

gates to take care of the prizes, and to pursue the enemy with the rest. "We must be contented," replied Hotham; "we have done very well." Nelson crossed over to the Princess Royal, and easily got Admiral Goodall to support his advice; but Hotham was still "contented," and still thought "he had done very well." "Now," said Nelson, when reporting the affair to his wife, "had we taken ten sail and allowed the eleventh to escape, when it had been possible to have got at her, I could never have called it well done." The day was to come when Nelson's principles, and not Hotham's, inspired our navy; but it had not arrived yet. Four months later the Admiral, who had been strongly reinforced, so that his fleet now consisted of twenty-three sail of the line, of which not fewer than six were three-deckers, again fell in with the French fleet in the gulf of Frejus; this time inferior to his own by six ships. Before he met them they had nearly made a prize which might have altered the complexion of the whole war. On the 7th of July the *Agamemnon* had been sent with a squadron of frigates to co-operate with the Piedmontese General De Vins in the Riviera of Genoa, and, when off Cape delle Melle, fell in with the whole French fleet, who at once gave her chase. Nelson worked back towards San Fiorenzo, where he had left the Admiral; but the wind was shifting and variable, at times dying away to a calm, and his admirable seamanship was never called upon for greater exertions than on this occasion: for seven hours he seemed to be almost in the enemy's possession, but they feared to follow him too close in shore, and at last he rejoined the main body. On thus receiving certain intelligence of the enemy's position, Hotham, who had no fear of responsibility while it was at a distance, at once put to sea, and, on the 13th, came in sight of them. They fled, and he chased, but when our leading ship, the *Cumberland*, Captain Rowley, had retaken the *Alcide*, 74, and



just as the *Victory*, the *Agamemnon*, Captain, and the rest of our advanced squadron were getting within gun-shot, Hotham began to fear approaching too near to the shore, though it was at least eight miles off, and made the signal to discontinue the action, and our fleet was again baulked of their prey. Individually brave, and not unskilful, as indeed he had shown more than once, in handling a single ship, Hotham seems to have wanted both ability to manage a fleet, and also to have been devoid of that higher attribute of moral courage which makes a man easy under responsibility. The history of the army can show similar instances in this same war. When, after the battle of Vimiero, Sir Harry Burrard stopped Ferguson's brigade in its victorious advance, the remonstrance made by Sir A. Wellesley was dictated by a spirit very similar to that which prompted Nelson's advice to his commander; and Burrard's reply was couched in almost the same words as that of Hotham :\*

"He thought a great deal had been done very much to the credit of the troops; but he did not consider it advisable to move off the ground in pursuit of the enemy." Sir Arthur showed, perhaps, even more indignation at seeing his exertions thus deprived of their merited result than Nelson displayed. Yet he subsequently admitted that Burrard "had had fair military reasons for his decision;" an observation which might, perhaps, have been equally used in justification of Hotham. Sir Harry, indeed, appears to have been, like the Admiral, a man of personal bravery and well versed in the ordinary rules of his profession, but unequal to responsibility; and both were as incapable of appreciating as of feeling the fervour of combined enterprise and genius which prompted their subordinate officers to try and rouse them to greater deeds, and which afterwards led those subordinate officers themselves to their careers of unequalled glory.

\* See Yonge's 'Life of Wellington,' vol. i., p. 133.

But Hotham's remissness was not limited to abstaining from reaping advantages which lay in his way. In one instance it caused us very considerable loss. In the middle of September a squadron of six sail of the line and three frigates, under Rear-Admiral Richery, was despatched from Toulon to Brest to raise Villaret Joyeuse's fleet to a level with ours in the Channel; and, though intelligence of this circumstance reached Hotham on the 22nd, he allowed thirteen days to elapse before he sent Admiral Mann to pursue it. Mann, of course, failed to overtake it; indeed, it was outside the Straits before he sailed; and two days afterwards it fell in with a valuable convoy of British merchantmen from the Levant, under the escort of Commodore Taylor, with three ships of the line and one frigate. One of the line-of-battle ships was the *Censeur*, which had been taken in Hotham's first action, and was now only jury-rigged and armed *en flute*, under the command of Capt. Gore. As Taylor prepared to form in line of battle, to resist the overwhelming force of the enemy, and, if possible, to save his convoy, the *Censeur* carried away her fore-topmast; when the action had lasted a short time she lost her other topmasts also; and, having expended all her powder, was compelled to surrender. The other men-of-war escaped, but thirty merchantmen, in fact, the whole convoy with the exception of a single vessel, were taken, and M. Richery bore his prizes triumphantly into Cadiz; Spain having, three months before, made peace with France at Bâle, and being already under the influence which, in the course of the next year, led her to form an offensive and defensive alliance with the Republic, and, as a necessary accompaniment of such a measure, to declare war upon ourselves.

No more active operations (if, indeed, those which have been related deserve to be called active) signalised the campaign of our main fleet in the Mediterranean this year. Meanwhile, as has been mentioned before, Nelson, with a

small squadron, was sent to Genoa to assist General de Vins, in which command he displayed every kind of ability, political as well as warlike, and every kind of courage, moral as well as personal. At one time he cut French vessels out of their harbours; at another he detained ships protected by neutral flags, knowing that they were in fact laden with supplies for the French troops campaigning in the north of Italy; but knowing also that if, by any legal quibbles, the owners succeeded in saving them from condemnation, he might be ruined by the lawsuits to which he would be rendered liable. At other times he was protecting the arrival of supplies to the Austrian army, and even devising measures, at the General's request, to transport the army itself to some more favourable position. Yet his squadron was wholly inadequate to the multifarious duties which were thus required of him, and he earnestly requested a reinforcement. It was apparently rather the fault of the Government at home than of the Admiral that he did not obtain it; for in the autumn Hotham went home, and the appointment of Lord Hood, who was to have succeeded him, was cancelled on account of the plainness with which he remonstrated against the insufficiency of the Mediterranean fleet. Sir John Jervis was substituted for him, but he did not reach the station till the end of the year: and during the autumn Sir Hyde Parker held the chief command, but no achievement of importance signalised the period of his power. The French fleets, disheartened, if not much injured, by the result of their conflicts with Hotham, and judging, perhaps, from the way in which they fared with him how unadvisable it must be to provoke a battle with any other commander, remained in their harbours; while their complete defeat of the Austrian and Piedmontese armies on land put an end to the co-operation of our fleets with those forces.

After Sir Sidney Smith had ascertained the departure of the French fleet from Brest, nothing was heard of them

for a month. Lord Howe put to sea at the head of a powerful force in search of them, but failed to meet with them; and it was subsequently ascertained that in the first week of February they had returned to that port, having been stopped in their cruise by a tremendous storm, as has been already mentioned. The great damage they had sustained confined them in Brest for three months after their return, and, with the exception of the despatch of a squadron under M. Renaudin to reinforce the Toulon fleet, no French ship quitted that harbour till May. In that month a small force of three sail of the line and some frigates sailed out as an escort to a small flotilla of coasting-vessels, and on their return narrowly escaped an encounter with a British squadron of superior strength, under Admiral Cornwallis, who in the course of his brief cruise displayed a skill and gallantry to which allusion has already been made, and which is almost the only feature in the naval history of the year on which a lover of the British navy can reflect with pleasure. With a squadron consisting of one three-decker, the Royal Sovereign, 100, on which his own flag was hoisted, four seventy-fours, two frigates, and a sloop, he had sailed from Spithead at the end of May, with directions to cruise off Ushant; and shortly after his arrival in the neighbourhood of that well-known island, he fell in with Admiral Vence's squadron, with a number of small trading vessels under its protection. He gave chase, and succeeded in capturing a few wine-vessels, but the main body reached Belleisle in safety. Villaret Joyeuse, who was still in Brest, hearing that his comrade was blockaded there, sailed at once to release him, but the British Admiral was not in Belleisle; he had returned homewards to conduct his prizes as far as the mouth of the Channel, and had not yet got back to his cruising-ground. Villaret Joyeuse, therefore, joined Admiral Vence without difficulty; and then, with their united force of one three-decker, *Le Peuple*, 120, eleven seventy-fours, and eleven



frigates, he cruised about in front of Brest and Ushant ; and on the 16th of June his look-out frigates again came in sight of Cornwallis, who was on his way back to Belleisle to look for M. Vence. Before such a fleet the British Admiral had no alternative but to retreat. The French pursued him, and were strong enough to divide their force, one squadron bearing to the northward so as to weather him, the other advancing straight towards him. During the night they gained upon him, and soon after breakfast got within gunshot of the Mars, the rearmost of his ships. Presently our other ships also came under fire, which, without slackening their course, they returned from their stern and quarter guns with such vigour that one or two of the French ships dropped astern, and discontinued the combat. Meantime the Mars had been terribly cut up in her rigging, and Cornwallis, resolved not to abandon a single ship, fell back to support her, relying on his own heavy broadsides to scare away all the seventy-fours and frigates, one of which, the Virginie, 32, Captain Bergeret (such gallantry even in an enemy as that officer displayed deserves the honour of a particular mention), had mingled nobly in the conflict, coming up close under the quarter of the Mars, and raking her with a severe fire for some time. The seventy-fours did, in fact, recoil from measuring their strength with the three-decker ; but the French had a three-decker, too, far larger than the Royal Sovereign, and no heroism nor superiority of skill on the part of the British Admiral could, in all likelihood, have saved himself and his whole squadron from capture, had they not been aided by a well-conceived and well-executed stratagem. Before daylight on the 17th he had detached one of his frigates, the Phaeton, with instructions to keep up a series of signals, the meaning of which, he was well aware, was as fully known to the enemy as to ourselves. Accordingly when she had got to such a distance that

what she might be supposed to see beyond her was necessarily quite out of sight of the combatants, she began to signal to the Admiral first that she saw a ship, then several ships, and at last that a whole fleet was in sight. Presently she added that it was a British fleet, and chiefly ships of the line. Some vessels were actually becoming visible in the distance, and the French commander, who believed our Channel fleet to be at sea, and probably at no great distance, was completely deceived. He fancied himself in danger of being led by his pursuit of his present foe into the grasp of an enemy as much superior to himself as he was to Cornwallis, and to the great joy of our squadron presently discontinued the chase and the action.

Though, however, the French, out of fear of our Channel fleet, thus let Admiral Cornwallis slip through their fingers, they did not ultimately escape the danger from which they had fled when it had no existence. The Channel fleet had, in fact, sailed from Spithead the very same day that M. Villaret Joyeuse had quitted Brest; and, as Lord Howe's health was no longer equal to the command, it was now led by Lord Bridport, the same officer who, as Sir Alexander Hood, had been third in command in the battle of the first of June of the preceding year, and had been ennobled for his share in that victory. He was the brother of Rodney's gallant second in command, Sir Samuel Hood, who had also been raised to the peerage under the title of Lord Hood, and whose exploits in the Mediterranean have filled so large a space in our account of the transactions of the year 1794. There is hardly another instance in our history of two brothers both thus raising themselves by their exploits in the same profession.

On desisting from the pursuit of Cornwallis, Villaret Joyeuse bore up for Brest, and on his way thither he did really come in sight of Lord Bridport, who had been keeping near the French shore to protect a squadron

under the command of Sir John B. Warren, which had been sent forth to aid an expedition undertaken by an army of French emigrants. Lord Bridport's was a most formidable fleet, not so much in numbers, since it only amounted to fourteen sail of the line and five frigates, as in the size of the vessels, of which the largest half were three-deckers.\* The French fleet, as in the preceding week, consisted of twelve sail of the line and eleven frigates; but when, on the 19th, it was first seen by the *Arethusa*, the look-out frigate of Warren's squadron after it had parted from the main fleet, she reported it by signal to consist of sixteen sail of the line; and Warren, when he sent back a frigate to Lord Bridport with the intelligence of the approach of the enemy, naturally conveyed the same statement to the Admiral. Lord Bridport, on receiving this message, desired Sir John to send him the line-of-battle ships attached to his squadron; but the wind prevented them from joining him, and he did not really stand in need of them; in fact, as he drew nearer to the enemy he must have discovered that he had a very great superiority of force.

Though they were so near, one or two perverse changes

\* The following is a list of Lord Bridport's fleet:

100	{	Royal George . . . .	{ Lord Bridport.
		Queen Charlotte . . . .	{ Capt. Donald.
			Capt. Sir A. S. Douglas.
98	{	Queen . . . . .	{ V.-Adm. Sir A. Gardner.
			{ Capt. Bedford.
		London . . . . .	{ V.-Adm. Colpoys.
			{ Capt. Griffith.
		Prince of Wales . . . .	{ R.-Adm. H. Harvey.
			{ Capt. Bazeley.
		Prince . . . . .	— Hamilton.
	{	Barfleur . . . . .	— Dacres.
		Prince George . . . .	— Edge.
80	{	Sans Pareil . . . . .	{ R.-Adm. Lord Hugh Seymour.
			{ Capt. Browell.
74	{	Valiant . . . . .	— Parker.
		Orion . . . . .	— Sir J. Saumarez.
		Irresistible . . . . .	— Gundale.
		Russell . . . . .	— Larcom.
		Colossus . . . . .	— Monkton.

of wind kept the two fleets apart for two days after the enemy was first seen by the *Arethusa*, and it was the morning of the 22nd before they came sufficiently near to one another for either to be certain of the force or of the designs of the other; but, when these were ascertained, it became evident that the French desired to avoid a battle, and accordingly Lord Bridport first signalled to his two-deckers (as being his fastest ships) to chase, and presently he gave the same order to the whole fleet. The French began to draw nearer to the land, as their most efficient protection; but they were at least twelve miles from it, and there was so little wind that they made but little progress in that or any other direction, while for the same reason the British fleet made equally little in overtaking them. As it was almost midsummer, there was no cessation of light sufficient to keep the enemy in sight, and a little before daybreak on the 23rd the wind freshened, and the British fleet, skilfully availing itself of every advantage, rapidly drew nearer to the enemy, till by six o'clock our leading ships were within gunshot of their rear. The first ship which they came up with was *L'Alexandre*, the same which, as the *Alexander*, had been taken by the French in the preceding year, and which sailed as badly in the hands of its new masters as when it had belonged to us. She began to fire her stern-chasers at the *Irresistible*, 74, which, with the *Orion*, 74, was not long in replying. The *Queen Charlotte*, admirably handled by Captain Snape Douglas (Sir Roger Curtis, whose flag she ought to have borne, being detained at Spithead on a court-martial), and the *Sans Pareil*, had kept up with the seventy-fours, and these two soon afterwards opened their fire on the *Formidable*, and speedily compelled her to strike. *L'Alexandre* surrendered also, as well as the *Tigre*, who had likewise been exposed to the broadsides of two British ships, the *Queen* and the *London*. All seemed going on as well as possible; two-



thirds of each fleet were engaged; three of the enemy were taken, and the huge *Peuple* herself was in no little danger, having already received considerable damage from the guns of the *Queen Charlotte*, the *Sans Pareil*, and the *Royal George*, when, at a quarter-past eight, the Admiral, to the amazement and disappointment of the whole fleet, made the signal to discontinue the action. The French were equally astonished, but much better pleased. One of their admirals has recorded his opinion that Lord Bridport had it in his power to have captured or destroyed every ship of their fleet. They were too wise to give him another chance, and, as soon as the tide allowed, retreated to their port of L'Orient, whither even a more enterprising commander could not have followed them. Our loss had been very slight. The killed and wounded in the whole British fleet did not amount to one hundred and fifty men, while the loss on board the three French ships that were captured alone reached the number of six hundred and seventy. What it was in the ships which escaped we have no means of knowing. Lord Bridport in his official letter alleges the proximity of the land, and apparently also the existence of some batteries, as the reason for his strange conduct; but the land was still three miles off; there was no wind likely to hurry the fleet on shore, and the batteries had certainly not fired a shot at us. Undoubtedly at the time that the action was discontinued, the British fleet was in no danger from either the land or the batteries; and the bare possibility that danger might ultimately have arisen, should never have been allowed to weigh against the certainty of doing further damage to the enemy. In spite of the success achieved, which was not unimportant, and of the advantages derived from it, which were very considerable, the action of the 23rd of June, while very honorable to some of the British captains, must be reckoned very discreditable to the Commander-in-chief. And it affords another instance of even a more glaring

kind than the conduct of Admiral Hotham under somewhat similar circumstances, of a man personally fearless, thoroughly versed in all the theoretical part of his profession, excellent as the captain of a single ship, or even as commander of a division of a fleet when under the authority of another, proving irresolute and timid in a post of responsibility, and being therefore totally unfit for independent command.

Nor was the discredit thus brought on our arms by the weakness of Lord Bridport compensated by any successful termination to the expedition of Sir John Warren. Two days after the engagement just described, Sir John entered Quiberon Bay. His squadron consisted of three sail of the line, and six frigates, and under their escort were a number of transports, having on board an army of two thousand five hundred French emigrants, under the command of the Count de Puisaye, and a supply of arms and ammunition sufficient for nearly twenty thousand more, who were expected to join the emigrants on their landing. The emigrants were landed in safety, and were faithfully joined by the royalist comrades at whose invitation they had come; but this was nearly the limit of the success obtained. They found themselves at once confronted by a well-organized army, which the Convention, then ruling at Paris, had entrusted to the command of Hoche, the ablest of all the generals whom the necessities of the Revolution had as yet raised up for its service. His superior skill easily triumphed over the undisciplined bravery of his royalist countrymen, and the first check which he gave them introduced disunion into their councils. The chiefs began to reproach and to recriminate on one another; their followers to seek their own safety, first by desertion, and then, in too many instances, by treachery. All that the British squadron could do was limited to re-embarking in safety those who were able to regain the shore: but by far the greater part had fallen beneath the

cannon of Hoche, or were reserved for a worse fate, the judicial massacres of the monsters who, though the Reign of Terror was over, still bore no small sway in the Councils of Paris.

The war with Holland did not at first lead to any active operations in Europe. We did, indeed, seize one or two line-of-battle ships and frigates, and a number of merchantmen which were lying at Plymouth when it first broke out, and we detached a small force under Admiral Duncan to the North Sea, to prevent any Dutch vessels from putting to sea from the Texel. But the most vulnerable points of the wealthy republic were in other quarters of the globe. She was great rather from her commercial riches than from her warlike power, and therefore it was against her settlements in Africa and India, as a principal source of that commerce and those riches, that we proposed to strike our first blows. From its situation half-way between Europe and India, the Cape of Good Hope was a post of great importance to ourselves as well as to Holland. It was strongly garrisoned with troops, but, being dependent on Europe for its chief supplies, it also required the support of a squadron of ships, and the Dutch were not known to have any force of that kind there at this time. Its reduction, therefore, was expected to prove an easy task ; and, about midsummer, Sir G. Keith Elphinstone was despatched against it with five sail of the line and two sloops, having also a small military force of five hundred men on board his squadron, who were to be aided by a sufficient number of marines and seamen from the fleet. The operations by land were placed under the command of Major-General Craig. The expedition reached the Cape at the beginning of August, summoned it, and received in reply the promise of a stout resistance, which the whole tenor of former Dutch history proved likely to be faithfully kept. And so it was. We possessed ourselves, indeed, of Simon's Town without

resistance, but the Dutch militia, aided by a body of Hottentots, occupied the heights behind, and showed a resolution manfully to dispute our further advance. Elphinstone landed three hundred and fifty marines and a thousand sailors to co-operate with the troops, and, arming the launches of the ships with heavy guns, sent them also close inshore. The sloops also and the sixty-fours, *America*, Captain Blankett, and *Stately*, Captain Douglas, stood in as near to the land as the depth of water would allow; and their fire, commanding the whole coast, cleared the way for Craig, and drove the Dutch from their camp on the shore before his arrival with the troops. So gallant, however, had been the resistance of the Dutch, though their principal battery was armed with no more than three fieldpieces, that they killed several men in both the *America* and the *Stately*, and disabled one of the *America's* guns.

Nor were they disheartened by the first defeat; on the contrary, they procured reinforcements from the interior, and made more than one vigorous effort to regain the position from which they had been driven. The General gave the most cordial applause to the seamen, on whom, from their preponderance of numbers, the brunt of the attack fell, declaring that they had manœuvred with a precision and steadiness that would have done credit to veteran soldiers. But the enemy had a great superiority of numbers, and our success was looking very doubtful, when, on the 3rd of September, a strong squadron of East Indiamen arrived with a reinforcement of troops under General Alured Clarke, and ample supplies of every kind of military stores. Against this accumulation of force the brave Governor, General Shuyshen, saw that it was vain to attempt to protract the struggle. He capitulated, and with him the garrison of a thousand regular soldiers became prisoners of war. The militia dispersed. A frigate and an armed brig belonging to the Dutch East India Company shared the fate of the settlement,



which thus became a British possession, as, with the exception of one short interval, it has continued ever since.

At the same time another small squadron, under the command of Rear-Admiral Rainier, consisting of the *Suffolk*, 74, the flagship the *Centurion*, 50, and the *Diomedé*, 44, with a small body of troops under the command of Colonel James Stuart, reached Trincomalee in Ceylon, with a view to the reduction of that important island. The attempt was not in every respect fortunate, for the *Diomedé* struck upon a hidden rock, and went down so suddenly that it was not without great difficulty that her crew were saved; but the resistance made by the Dutch was of a very different character to that which had been offered by their countrymen at the Cape. After a very brief attack the garrison surrendered, though the fort was armed with nearly a hundred heavy guns; and the other strongholds followed their example; so that the eastern side of the island became ours without costing us a greater loss than sixteen men killed and sixty wounded. And about the same time another squadron made itself successively master, almost without resistance, of Malacca, Chinsura, and all the other settlements belonging to Holland on the continent of India.

In the West Indies we were less successful; a French squadron of men-of-war and transports, with three thousand troops on board, though pursued and overtaken by Captain Wilson of the *Bellima*, 74, with the 32-gun frigate *Alarm*, Captain Carpenter, by the sacrifice of one of the transports purchased the safety of the rest, and reached Guadaloupe. From that island detachments were easily conveyed to *Sante Lucie*, *Dominique*, *St. Vincent*, and *Grenada*; and, though they were defeated at *Dominique*, and were only partially successful at *Grenada*, and *St. Vincent*, they compelled our garrison entirely to abandon *Sainte Lucie*; and the only service that our seamen employed in these regions could render to their country con-

sisted in providing for the safe embarkation of the soldiers, and conveying them to other stations where they might be of more use.

In actions between single ships we were this year almost invariably successful, whenever the combatants were nearly of equal force ; as we were also in one instance when the enemy had greatly the advantage. Among the officers most conspicuous in services of this kind was Captain Faulknor, the same who in the preceding year had distinguished himself so brilliantly at Martinique, and who had since that time been promoted to the command of the *Blanche*, a 32-gun frigate, with an additional armament of six heavy carronades. He had already cut out a large armed schooner from a bay in the island of Desirade, though she was protected by a powerful fort, and though some companies of infantry also came down to the water's edge to aid her against the *Blanche's* boats ; when he heard that the *Pique*, a French frigate, of exactly the same number of guns, though superior to the *Blanche* in weight of metal, and, still more, in the number of her crew, was lying at Guadaloupe. He at once sailed in quest of her ; and she, not disinclined to a combat for the honour of the French flag, gallantly came forth to meet him. Both frigates were skilfully handled, and each maintained a well-directed and incessant fire on her antagonist ; the Frenchman, according to the habitual tactics of his nation, aiming chiefly at our rigging, the Englishman at the enemy's hull. So effective was the fire on both sides, that the *Blanche* lost both her main and mizen mast, while the *Pique* had the unparalleled number of a hundred and eighty-six men killed and wounded. And it is remarkable that both the Captains were among the slain. When the loss of her masts seemed to have disabled the *Blanche*, the *Pique* tried to board ; but Faulknor, who had not yet fallen, successfully repelled the attempt, and after his death, his first lieutenant, Mr. Watkins, followed his

example, and fought the ship with such skill and resolution that, at last, after a combat of three hours, the French ship surrendered. Our loss only amounted to eight killed, and twenty-one wounded. But the *Blanche* was greatly crippled, and the assistance of the *Veteran*, who joined her a couple of hours after the battle, was greatly needed to aid her and her prize in reaching a port where they could repair their damages.

Another action, to which we partly alluded as one in which the French had a great superiority of force, which, however, failed to save them from defeat, was maintained by Lord Henry Paulet in the *Astræa*, 32, against the *Gloire*, 42; the difference in the weight of metal of the broadside of the two ships, and in the number of their crews, exceeding even that disproportion. Nevertheless, after an hour's hard fighting, the *Gloire* was taken, having lost forty men killed and wounded, while the *Astræa* had nobody killed, and only eight men hurt.

A third engagement, where the enemy had an advantage which greatly enhanced the credit of our officers' victory, was fought near Minorea between two pairs of frigates; the *Dido*, 28, Captain Towry, and the *Lowestoffe*, 32, Captain Middleton, being opposed to *La Minerve*, 40, and *L'Artemise*, 36. The *Minerve* alone was superior in her tonnage, and in the weight of her broadside, to both the British frigates together. The French crews exceeded six hundred men; the British crews were four hundred: yet in spite of this great disparity of force, *La Minerve* was taken by the *Dido*, and *L'Artemise* was glad to avail herself of the crippled state of the *Lowestoffe*, whose mizen-mast was shot through, to make sail and escape. *La Minerve* was added to the British Navy, and, as will be presently seen, was in the next year honoured by bearing the pendant of Nelson, and under his command proving as invincible as every other ship that ever bore that greatest of sailors.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1796.

Capture of the Dutch squadron in Saldanha Bay — Failure of the French attempt to invade Ireland — Sir John Jervis takes the command of the Mediterranean fleet — Nelson has a squadron off Genoa — Cuts out some vessels in Loano Bay — Removes the British residents from Leghorn — Occupies Elba and Caprera — Spain declares war against England — We evacuate Corsica — Jervis retires outside the Straits of Gibraltar — Nelson is sent to remove the troops from Elba — General de Burgh decides on remaining — Nelson takes the *Sabina* — The Spanish fleet recover her — In America Admiral Richery destroys our fishing-stations at Miquelon, &c. — We recover Sainte Lucie, St. Vincent, &c. — Admiral Christian is driven back by a storm — Sir Sidney Smith destroys French vessels in Herqui Bay — He is taken prisoner at Havre and imprisoned in the Temple — He escapes — The *Santa Margarita* and *Unicorn* take the *Tamise* and the *Tribune* — The *Terpsichore* takes the *Mahonesa* — The *Pelican* beats off the *Medée*.

OF naval operations and achievements on a large scale the next year was almost entirely barren : though not of formidable preparations, nor of political events calculated to have an important influence on the subsequent course of the war. The Dutch did, indeed, take advantage of a temporary absence of Duncan from the Texel to send one squadron of three sail of the line and four frigates to sea, which, after a tedious passage, reached Saldanha Bay in August, being destined for the recapture of the Cape of Good Hope : but Sir George Elphinstone was still on that station with seven sail of the line, a 50-gun ship, a frigate, and several smaller vessels, a force with which the new comers were wholly unable to contend. Elphinstone, on hearing of their approach, at once sailed to meet them, found them at anchor, and summoned them to surrender ; they had no choice but to comply : and thus this, the largest force which came in contact with our fleets during the whole



year, merely added a few well-built and well-supplied ships to our navy, without costing us the life of a single man or even a single charge of powder.

With our chief enemy, the French, we had no conflict whatever in Europe. A large fleet lay in Brest and preparations were known to be making for some great expedition, the object of which was carefully concealed ; though our shrewdest statesmen believed it to be Ireland, and the event proved their conjecture to be correct. The design formed by the French Government, or rather by General Hoche, who won the assent of the authorities at Paris to his plan, was that the fleet should escort him and a powerful army to the southern coast of that unquiet island, where political discontent was known to prevail extensively at that time ; and where, from the information he had received he expected to find a large body of the natives prepared to welcome him, and to co-operate with him in effecting the subjugation of the country to France. So much time, however was, perhaps unavoidably, consumed in the preliminary arrangements, that the armament did not sail from Brest till the middle of December ; and only sailed then to meet with entire failure, without our fleet having been called upon to act against it. When it quitted Brest harbour it was a truly formidable force. The veteran admiral M. Morard de Galles, Keppel's old opponent, was the naval commander-in-chief : and his fleet consisted of seventeen sail of the line, thirteen frigates, and a number of corvettes, transports, and smaller vessels, having on board an army of eighteen thousand men, doubled in its efficiency by the great talent of its general, who was on board the flagship ; and who, among his subordinate officers, had Grouchy, already favourably known for his hardihood and enterprise, and destined to display those qualities in incessant conflicts with us and our allies till the very last battle of this eventful war. Formidable as it was, however, its disasters began almost before it got clear of the harbour : Admiral

Colpoys with ten sail of the line, was known to be cruising off Ushant; and, to escape his notice, M. Morard de Galles decided on taking the fleet through the narrow passage known as du Raz. Subsequently he changed his mind; but his signals were misunderstood by some of the captains. In the confusion which ensued, one ship of the line, *Le Séduisant*, 74, was wrecked on the rocks near the entrance of the passage: the fleet separated; the *Fraternité* frigate, in which were both the military and naval commanders-in-chief, never rejoined it. But the greater part of the ships reunited at the end of two days, and with them Rear-Admiral Bouvet on the 21st reached Bantry Bay, a spot already celebrated, something more than a century before, as the scene of the first conflict between the fleets of William, in his new character of King of England, and Louis XIV., when that sovereign was making the first attempt to invade Ireland in the cause of his ally, the expelled James II. There the invading armament anchored while some of the frigates reconnoitred the coast: but, before any attempts could be made to disembark the troops, a gale came on which drove the fleet from its anchors; sank one, dismantled others, and drove several on shore, till Bouvet, judging the remnant of his force no longer equal to the enterprise before it, decided on returning to Brest, which he reached on the first day of the new year. A fortnight later, the *Fraternité*, which had been driven far out to the eastward, and had nearly been captured by some of our frigates, put into Rochefort; but, though Hoche would gladly have resumed the expedition, the Government conceived that there was more pressing need of him and his troops, to retrieve the losses which their armies had suffered on the Rhine. And the expedition was laid aside for a time, to be renewed a year or two afterwards, with similar encouragement from the Irish rebels, and with no very dissimilar result.

In the Mediterranean Rear-Admiral Brueys now had

the command of the Toulon fleet, which consisted of fifteen sail of the line ; but which, for many months, never ventured to quit that harbour, knowing that the British fleet was not only superior in number, but was moreover under the command of Sir John Jervis, an officer of a very different stamp from its late admiral. In the existing position of the affairs of the countries bordering on the Mediterranean ; Sardinia carrying on an unsuccessful war against France ; Tuscany too weak to assert, or at all events to maintain, its neutrality ; and Spain, already partly under French guidance, and rapidly becoming more submissive to it, and in consequence more unfriendly to us ; while on the southern shores also revolutionary intrigues were so busy that it seemed not improbable that we might have a war with Algiers and Tunis also on our hands ; it was fortunate that the new commander-in-chief was not only a man of great professional skill and courage, but also of great political capacity and eminent decision of character. His latest employment, however, as was mentioned in the last chapter, had been on the other side of the Atlantic, and it was more than twenty years since he had been in the Mediterranean ; accordingly, on his first arrival, he stood in need of information and advice as to the state of affairs there. And for both, with great judgment, he applied to Nelson ; speedily discerning that officer's pre-eminent merit, and taking him fully into his confidence.

Some of Nelson's brother officers seem to have regarded the undisguised favour in which he was held with some degree of envy : saying that it made no difference who was commander-in-chief ; Hood, Hotham, and now Jervis, all agreeing in letting him do just as he pleased. The statement was not far from the truth ; but it only affords a corroborating testimony (if any such were needed) to the pre-eminent merit of Nelson : in fact, during the whole of his stay in the Mediterranean, a period of seven years,

whoever was the commander-in-chief, he was the principal agent in every exploit of importance. Under Lord Hood, it was he who reduced Corsica ; under Admiral Hotham, it was he who took the only ships that were taken in his action ; under Jervis, as will presently be seen, he not only played the principal part in the great victory of St. Vincent, but afterwards, in independent command, gained another which wholly eclipsed it ; recovered Malta ; and in fact drew the eyes of the whole service and the whole nation on himself, it may almost be said on himself alone.

So, too, in this year, the little that was done in the Mediterranean was done by him. The Admiral sent him with a detached squadron to watch the Italian coast from Genoa to Vado : in order, if possible to assist the combined Austrian and Sardinian forces which, under the command of General Beaulieu, were making feeble attempts to stem the advance of the French, at whose head Buonaparte, now for the first time at the head of an army, was developing that wonderful genius which soon made him master of continental Europe. The employment was a delicate one, since the Republic of Genoa was so completely under French influence, that, in the preceding year, the Marquis of Spinola, the Genoese minister in London, had complained of the capture of a French convoy in the Bay of Allassio, as a breach of the neutrality of the Genoese territory ; though he could not deny that the French were in possession of the whole line of their coast to the west of Genoa, where they had erected batteries from which they fired on our ships. Nelson, however, was as richly endowed with political and moral courage as with warlike valour. He was well aware that, whatever might be the official language held by the authorities in the city, the inhabitants of the Genoese territory approved of and were thankful for his conduct : and the moment he reached Genoa, he put himself in communication with General Beaulieu ; posting his ships so as to command the coast road, and thus cutting



off the French army from that line of advance against the allies. The General was nervous, as a landsman might be pardoned for being, about the ability of ships to keep long out of harbour ; but Nelson assured him that all places would suit his squadron equally, and that, wherever the Austrian army might be, there it should find him at hand to co-operate with it. His ships drew too much water for him to be able to put an entire stop to the movements of small vessels coasting in-shore ; but, whenever he was able to employ his boats against them, he did so with great vigour and invariable success. On one occasion he cut out some vessels lying under the batteries of Loano ; on another, he made himself master of a still more important flotilla on its way from Toulon to Buonaparte's army, laden with cannon and ordnance stores destined for the siege of Mantua. It took refuge under the batteries of Oneglia, but Nelson with the *Agamemnon* and *Meleager* frigate silenced the battery as well as one or two gunboats ; and then sent in the boats, which brought out every one of the vessels. The capture of them and of their stores was the principal cause of the failure of the siege of Mantua ; but no aid which we could afford him by sea, could enable the Austrian General long to preserve his communications with us. Buonaparte advanced, gaining almost daily victories : Beaulieu, cut off from the coast, was driven towards Milan ; and the only service now left to Nelson to render in that quarter was the removal of the British residents from Leghorn, with their property, and the large magazines which had been collected in that city for the use of our fleet.

As a set-off to the forced evacuation of this important city, he proceeded in July, in pursuance of orders from the Admiral, to convey a small force to Elba, which took possession of Porto Ferrajo ; and it was hoped that this acquisition might enable us to preserve Corsica. It was probably with the same view that in September he was

also sent to summon the still smaller island of Capraja : it capitulated, being indeed in no condition to resist ; and several French privateers and other vessels, with some valuable stores, fell into his hands. But these acquisitions failed in their object. In the course of August, Spain concluded a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with France. Early in October she declared war against us ; and, as it had from the first been resolved by our Government in such an event to abandon Corsica, the resolution was at once carried out ; and Nelson, to whom its reduction had been principally due, was now despatched with the rank of Commodore, and with a sufficient squadron, to superintend the evacuation, bringing away our troops and stores, with any of the natives who had reason to believe themselves obnoxious to the French. It was a task which required a firm hand. The knowledge of our intentions naturally stimulated the partisans of France. They erected a provisional government at Bastia, laid a privateer across the bay to prevent the passage of boats and the removal of stores, and even had it in contemplation to seize Sir Gilbert Elliott, who, since our occupation of the island, had acted as governor. Nelson brought his ships close up the Mole, and sent the Provisional Government a message that, if they resisted the removal of every atom of English property, he would batter the town about their ears. As Captain Towry, of the *Diadem*, 64, the ship which now bore Nelson's pendant, approached the shore with this message, the Corsican troops on shore, as well as a privateer in the harbour, pointed their guns at his boat. Captain Sutton of the *Egmont*, went to the support of Towry, and, pulling out his watch, gave notice that, if within a quarter of an hour consent to the unmoisted removal of everything belonging to the British were not given, in five minutes more the ships should open their fire. The crew of the privateer and even the Corsican sentries at once ran away. Still difficulties were made

from time to time, till at last Nelson sent the Provisional Government word that if they were continued he would come amongst them himself. From that moment all resistance ceased: everything he desired was brought off in safety, and it was not done too soon. It was sunset on the 19th of October, before the embarkation of men and goods was completed. At midnight the British squadron sailed for Porto Ferrajo; and on the 20th a Spanish fleet of twenty-six sail of the line and ten frigates came in sight of Corsica.

After cruising around the island for a day or two, Admiral Langara, who commanded that great fleet, sailed for Toulon, and united it to the force under the command of Brueys; while Jervis, in pursuance of strict orders from home, dictated by the desire of affording efficient protection to Portugal, led his whole fleet to the Straits of Gibraltar, and anchored in Rosia Bay. While he lay there he had the mortification of seeing a squadron of five sail of the line and three frigates pass through the Straits, under Rear-Admiral Villeneuve, an able officer who had already distinguished himself in the service of his country, but whose name in British eyes is rather connected with the greatest naval overthrow it ever received. The French were borne past Jervis on a stiff easterly breeze, which soon freshened into a perfect storm, and which not only prevented the British Admiral from pursuing them, but drove one of his best ships, the *Courageux*, 74, on shore, where she was lost, and nearly destroyed the *Gibraltar*, 80, Captain Pakenham, and the *Culloden*, 74, Captain Troubridge, in the same manner.

Before the winter Jervis decided to evacuate Capraja and Elba, considering those islands useless to us since the fleet had been removed from the Mediterranean; and again the removal of our troops was entrusted to Nelson. When he arrived at Elba, however, he found the commander of

the troops, General de Burgh, doubtful both of the propriety of the measure and of the Admiral's authority to decide upon it. And, as Sir Gilbert Elliott, who accompanied Nelson, in some degree coincided in those objections, the departure of the troops was deferred, and Nelson's task was limited to the withdrawal of the naval establishment, and the embarkation of such stores as were not required by the soldiers for their immediate use. His voyage from Rosia was not uninterrupted. He had lately been removed from the *Diadem* to the *Captain*, 74; but for that particular service he had shifted his pendant into the *Minerve*, 38, Captain Cockburn, having also the *Blanche*, 32, Captain Preston, under his orders; and, on the 19th of December, as he was approaching Carthage, he fell in with two Spanish frigates of forty guns each. He signalled the *Blanche* to attack one while he fell himself upon the larger, the *Sabina*. As the *Minerve*, in addition to the complement at which she was rated, had also four carronades, she was, except in the number of her crew, rather the more powerful vessel of the two. But the *Sabina* made a gallant resistance. Her captain was Don Jacopo Stuart, a lineal descendant of the Duke of Berwick, the noble victor of Almanza, and (consequently) of the ancient kings of our own country, and he fought his ship as became his royal lineage. But the fortune and genius of Nelson prevailed; the *Sabina* was taken, and Nelson crowned his victory by restoring to Don Jacopo his sword and his liberty, ostensibly out of admiration for his gallant conduct, but in part also from the respect he felt to be due from an Englishman to the royal blood that flowed in his veins. The *Blanche* also captured her antagonist, the *Ceres*; but Nelson had hardly secured his prize when he was assailed by a second enemy. He beat her off, but the masts of the *Minerve* had been too much shattered by the *Sabina* for him to be able to pursue her; and he was still repairing his damages



when two Spanish sail of the line and two frigates bore down upon him, and threatened not only to recover the Sabina, but to take the Minerve. The Sabina they did recover, but so skilful was the seamanship that handled the English frigate, of which Nelson in his despatch generously gave Cockburn the credit, that they could do nothing with her; in a similar manner a Spanish three-decker, *El Principe d'Asturias*, and two frigates wrested the *Ceres* from the *Blanche*, so that, though she and the *Minerve* took two ships, they made no prizes.

In the American waters likewise the balance of success was greatly in our favour. Admiral Richery, with a powerful squadron, did, indeed, destroy our fishing-establishments at Miquelon and St. Pierre; but we recovered Sainte Lucie, St. Vincent, and Grenada, and reduced the Dutch settlements of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice. In St. Domingo, too, we made progress, failing, indeed, in our attack on Leogane, but taking the fort of Bombarde. And it was owing to the elements, and not to our human foes, that our success in those regions was not far more decisive: for in November Admiral Christian sailed from Portsmouth with a powerful squadron, escorting an army of sixteen thousand men, a force strong enough to have swept the whole of the West Indies; but he had not yet got clear of the Channel when he encountered a storm of unusual violence: some of the transports foundered, more were driven on shore, and the rest were glad to regain the harbour. And when, three weeks afterwards, the expedition was resumed, it met with similar disasters, and a second time the Admiral was forced to return to Spithead, and the enterprise was abandoned, or at least laid aside for a time; though so convinced were the authorities at home that Christian had done all that lay in his power, that they conferred rewards on him that are usually reserved for successful commanders, and made him a

Knight of the Bath, thus showing that, for once at least, actual success was not regarded so much as the valour and conduct that deserved, and, were there not a power greater than that of man, would have ensured it.

In India the chronicle of events is but a record of our successes, though they were rather of a character to extend our commercial riches in future, than to have any present influence on the war. We reduced Negombo, Colombo, and, in short, the whole Western side of Ceylon, so that the whole island was thus brought under our dominion; and on the other side of the Bay of Bengal we also captured the Molucca and Banda islands; thus striking a severe blow at the trade of the Dutch between Europe and the East. But these acquisitions, though they enriched the seamen who made them, did not cost them a single shot, and a passing mention is, therefore, the most to which they are entitled.

If our fleets fought no great battles this year, on the other hand, actions fought by detached frigates were unusually numerous. We have mentioned the capture and subsequent escape of the *Sabina* and *Ceres*, but this was not the only, nor even the most remarkable, conflict of the kind. And in one respect this year is almost singular in its good fortune, namely, that while in it we captured French, Dutch, and even Spanish ships (though the war with Spain did not commence till October), not a single British ship in any quarter of the globe struck her flag to an enemy. To particularise all our victories of this kind would be impossible and monotonous; we must confine ourselves to a very few, remarkable either for some especial circumstance, or from the subsequent eminence of the officer who now distinguished himself: and the first event of the kind that claims our notice does so on both these grounds. In March, Sir Sydney Smith, with a small squadron, consisting of the *Diamond*, 38, the *Liberty*, a 14-gun-brig, and a small hired lugger, performed a

most gallant exploit in the small harbour of Herqui, on the northern coast of France: It was fortified with two small batteries of heavy guns, and, what the more tempted him to attack it, there lay in it at that time a 16-gun corvette, and eight smaller vessels, which had sought shelter there from himself and others of our cruisers. They had to learn that the efficacy of such a shelter depends rather on those from whom escape is aimed at, than on the strength of the position. And Sir Sidney was not easily deterred by either natural or artificial obstacles. The batteries were well garrisoned, and their gunners were skilful. They were also wholly out of the reach of the Diamond's fire. But he sent in a party in boats, who scaled the heights on which they were constructed, stormed them, and spiked the guns; and then the ship, standing closer in, burnt the corvette, and seven out of her eight companions, and got safe out to sea again, with a loss of only three men killed and six wounded. Unhappily, in a second attempt of a similar kind, Sir Sidney was less successful. The Diamond had parted from her comrades, and was passing by herself in front of Havre, when he espied in the inner road, with her sails bent and ready for sea, the Vengeur, a 10-gun lugger, which had often done great mischief to our trade in the Channel. He resolved to cut her out; and, as his first lieutenant had been sent home with despatches, and the second and third were ill, he took the command of the boats destined for the service himself. The enemy made a stout resistance; but apparently a vain one, for our men disregarded and overpowered her fire, boarded her, and hauled down her colours. Their success ruined them. During the few minutes that the conflict had lasted the Vengeur's crew had found time to cut her cable, the tide was flowing strongly, and, even before our men gained possession of her, she had begun to drift towards the shore. The boats tried to tow her out, and a sail was hoisted, but the wind was too light for that expedient

to be of service; a small kedge-anchor was dropped, but that failed to hold her. Sir Sidney quitted her to return to the Diamond in his boat; but presently seeing some boats coming out from the town to recover the Vengeur, and being unwilling to abandon the men whom he had left on board without striking a blow for them, and for the preservation of his prize, he returned to her, but was overpowered, and was himself captured. With that scandalous disregard of the usages of war of which the French Government at that time gave too many instances, they caused him and one of his midshipmen, Mr. Wright, to be conveyed to Paris, where they were threatened with death, and were ultimately thrown into cells in the Temple, that odious prison which had of late proved fatal to so many illustrious captives, and which, could his gaolers have divined the future that was in store for him, would doubtless have proved equally fatal to himself. For two years he was kept in the most rigorous confinement, from which he at last effected his escape, just at the time when a field was opened for his exertions, which has attached to his name a celebrity due partly to the brilliancy of skill and audacity which he himself displayed, but still more to the interest yet attaching to every circumstance of the career of the great French conqueror, whose most darling schemes were for the time frustrated, and whose whole subsequent prospects were very nearly blighted by the English Captain's success under the walls of Acre.

One most creditable and successful action was fought by an officer who in the present generation rose to be admiral of the fleet, Captain Byam Martin. He was captain of the Santa Margarita, 36, and had with him the Unicorn, 32, when early on a June morning, cruising off the Scilly Isles, he discovered two French 36-gun frigates, and an 18-gun corvette. He at once gave chase; but so even was the speed of the vessels, that, though the French were but three miles distant when they were first seen, nearly twelve



hours elapsed before he got within gunshot of them, and then the first fire came from the enemy, who, by aiming high at the rigging of their pursuers, hoped to disable them from continuing the chase. Three hours more elapsed before the *Santa Margarita* could deliver a broadside with effect, but after that, the combat was brief; in twenty minutes the French ship struck, and the captors had the satisfaction of finding that they had retaken the *Tamise*, which, under her English name of the *Thames*, had been captured at the beginning of the war by an entire squadron of the enemy. The *Unicorn* had a longer chase and a longer conflict. It was nearly midnight when she overtook the vessel that was left to her (the corvette had long since fled in a different direction), and she did not subdue her till the heavy fire had carried away her foremast, mainmast, and mizentopmast, and killed and wounded above fifty men. The prize proved to be the *Tribune*, under which name she was added to the British Navy. One circumstance connected with her capture is so strange as to deserve particular mention, namely the fact that, in an action in which the *Unicorn* so entirely disabled her enemy, she had not a single man hurt. The *Thames* was not the only prize which the *Santa Margarita* made this year. She was an excellent sailer, and in the course of the autumn she took so many privateers, the *Vengeur*, which had proved so unlucky to Sir Sidney Smith, among the number, that she was at last forced to return to England, because the prisoners whom she had on board equalled the number of her own crew.

The only other conflict besides that of the *Sabina*, which any Spanish ship had with a British one, ended like that, in the capture of the enemy: when the *Terpsichore*, 32, Captain R. Bowen, took the *Mahonesa*, 34. But perhaps the most gallant action that took place between single ships during the whole year, though it did not terminate in either making prize of her foe, was one fought by a

British 18-gun brig, the Pelican, Captain Searle, against a frigate of more than double her size. To render the inequality the more striking, the Pelican had but four-fifths of her proper crew on board, the remainder being away in prizes; but notwithstanding, when overtaken by the *Medée*, a 36-gun French frigate, she scorned either to surrender or to flee; (which latter attempt must indeed have been fruitless, since the *Medée* had the weather-gage and was one of the fastest vessels in the French navy). She actually maintained the combat for nearly two hours; at the end of which time the *Medée* made off, and the Pelican's rigging was too much cut to pieces to allow her to pursue, which Captain Searle would willingly have done. He did so far follow up his advantage as to retake the *Alcyon*, a prize lately made by the *Medée*; but the Frenchman's boats eventually recovered her, capturing in her a prize crew which the Pelican had put on board, under the command of Lieutenant Ussher. It was afterwards learnt, from the report of this officer, that the *Medée* had lost in killed and wounded, thirty-three men; and that he had had a hard task to make the Frenchmen believe that the vessel which had so maltreated them was not a frigate as large as their own, with her mizenmast removed.

## APPENDIX.

THE following account of the capture of the Alcide and Lys appears to be a copy forwarded to Mrs. Boscawen, of a private letter from Admiral Boscawen to the First Lord of the Admiralty.

“ Torbay, off the Harbour of Louisburg 21st June, 1755.

“ You will see by my public letter the ill-success I have had against the French. On the 9th instant I heard of a single ship on the banks, about the size of a fifty-gun ship, full of soldiers, by which I concluded they had pursued the scheme of sending their ships armed *en flûte* without a convoy; but on the 8th, seeing four large ships with two flags at the mizen-top-masthead, I found I was mistaken. As they bore down upon us, making signals, I concluded they took us for their own ships: nor whilst we saw them did they ever seem to think otherwise, for they never hauled their wind, nor did they make sail; three of them only having their topsails and foresail, the others topsails only. About eleven in the forenoon we lost them in a thick fog, which continued till the next day about ten in the morning; and, when it cleared up, five of the squadron had lost company, but soon after we saw them all to windward in chase; I was in hopes, of the same four sail, especially as upon my making the signal to them to bear down, the Defiance made the signal that they could speak with the chase, which proved to be two small ships from France bound to Quebec. In the evening we made three large ships, and upon my hoisting French colours they bore down to us; it proving little wind they could not join us, but by our keeping the wind we saw them at daylight on the 9th, six or seven miles on our lee-bow; they made signals, which not being answered by us, they bore away, making all the sail they could. About noon the Dunkirk came alongside of the sternmost, and as I did not perceive the French ship shortened sail, I made the signal to engage, which was instantaneously obeyed by Captain Howe, and returned by the French ship, which, in less than ten minutes, was brought by the lee and ceased firing, the Torbay being the next ship. Upon the first and only gun that I fired, they struck their colours; the Alcide of sixty-four guns, five hundred and ninety men, commanded by Monsieur Hoquart;

the Fougueux, Northumberland, and Defiance, continued the chase after the two others, and about four the *Lis*, pierced for sixty-four guns, but only twenty on board, struck, after firing stern-chasers for two hours at the *Defiance*. She was commanded by Monsieur Longueville, a captain in the royal navy of France, and had on board eight companies of foot: four of the regiment *La Reine*, and four of the regiment of *Languedoc*. Monsieur Hoquart says that in the action they lost fifty-four men killed and as many wounded; since which they have buried thirty-four dead of their wounds. Captain Howe lost seven in action, and had twenty-seven wounded. At the time the *Dunkirk* fired they were so near as to converse without speaking-trumpets. The *Dauphin Royal*, the third ship, that had nine companies on board of the regiment of *Bourgogne*, escaped by a fog coming on, which lasted two days, in which we lost company with the *Defiance*, *Fougueux*, *Lichfield*, *Alcide*, and *Lis*. On the 18th I was joined by the four first-mentioned; but the *Lis* had parted company with them three days, having orders, in case of separation, to proceed directly to *Halifax*. There were on board two lieutenants and one hundred English seamen, and near three hundred French soldiers. All the French officers and seamen were on board the *Defiance*, *Fougueux*, and *Lichfield*. I have since sent those three ships, with the *Mars* and *Alcide*, to *Halifax* to complete their water; and I shall to-morrow send Rear-Admiral *Holburne* in the *Terrible*, with the *Grafton* and *Augusta*, to the same place: proposing to remain here with the rest of the ships under my command, in hopes still of picking up some of the stragglers.

"I should have before told your Lordship that I was joined yesterday by Mr. *Holburne* with the squadron, and that I have this morning been within one mile of the harbour, in which I could only see three large ships, two frigates, and one that we judge to be an hospital. One of the ships had a cornet at the mizen-topmasthead, and thirteen ports in her lower deck, which the French on board this ship say is the *Bizarre*.

"I purpose, as soon as Mr. *Holburne* returns to this station, to go with the remainder of the squadron to *Halifax*, in order to refit, and then to return to England, leaving Rear-Admiral *Holburne* on this station, with five or six sail of the line only, as he will be strong enough for any force the French have here.

"I flatter myself the little we have done may in some



measure have disconcerted the schemes of the French, for the ships we saw in the harbour to-day had all their yards and top-masts down, sails unbent, and some of them unrigged; the ship that had the cornet at the mizen-topmast head, her bowsprit out; and they must have landed some of the troops here; by the best information I can get, it is impossible for Europeans to march by land to Quebec; besides that Monsieur De Rostang, who commanded the land-forces in the second fort, was killed on board the Alcide; and three engineers taken, as you will see by part of the journal of Monsieur Connesac, which I send to Mr. Cleveland. He was second-lieutenant of the Alcide, and I believe this was only a preamble to a journal which he intended to keep.

"I beg leave to assure your Lordship I have done everything in my power to disappoint the schemes of the French; and am sorry to say we are very sickly, having now three hundred sick (with deaths, sick sent into Halifax in the tender, and on board the Alcide, and sick on board that cannot come to quarters). Many of the ships are also sickly, and it is almost impossible any can recover, as we have such constant fogs, and were surrounded with islands of ice for three weeks that we were near and on the banks of Newfoundland. I was in hopes the fine weather we have had for the last week would have recovered some; but, as it still continues cold, our sick increases, all with raging fevers; yesterday only we had twenty-five taken. Notwithstanding this, I propose to keep the sea as long as there is a probability of doing any service. I beg leave to assure your Lordship nothing shall be omitted that is in the power of your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

"ED. BOSCAWEN.

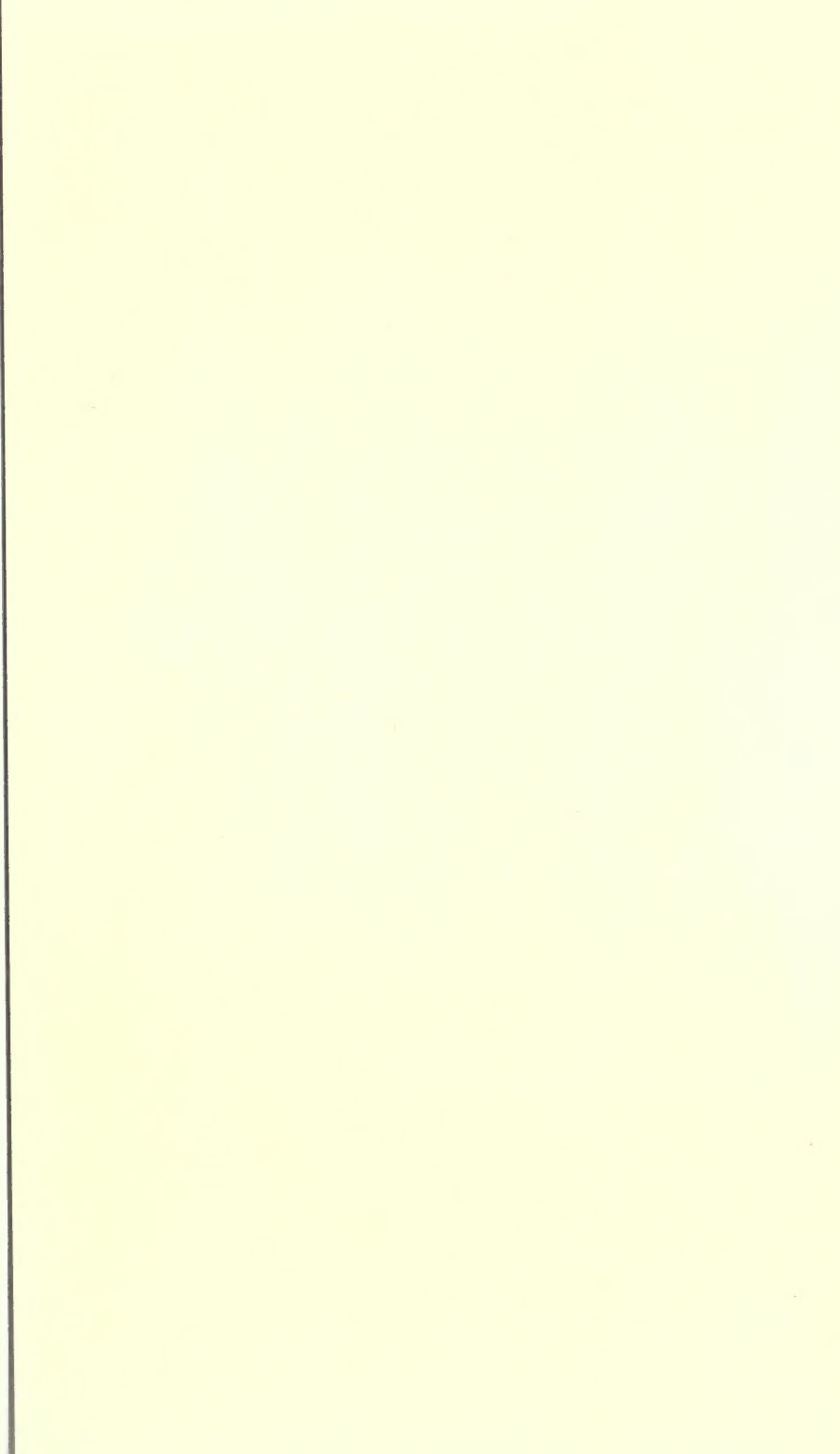
"P.S. There was about 3800*l*. on board each of the ships that we have taken, but it was plundered before the boats got on board. We have searched and recovered some of it: this was for payment of the troops."

"N.B. My dear Fanny, the paragraph circumflexed" [that in parenthesis] "was entirely altered, but in substance contained the same."

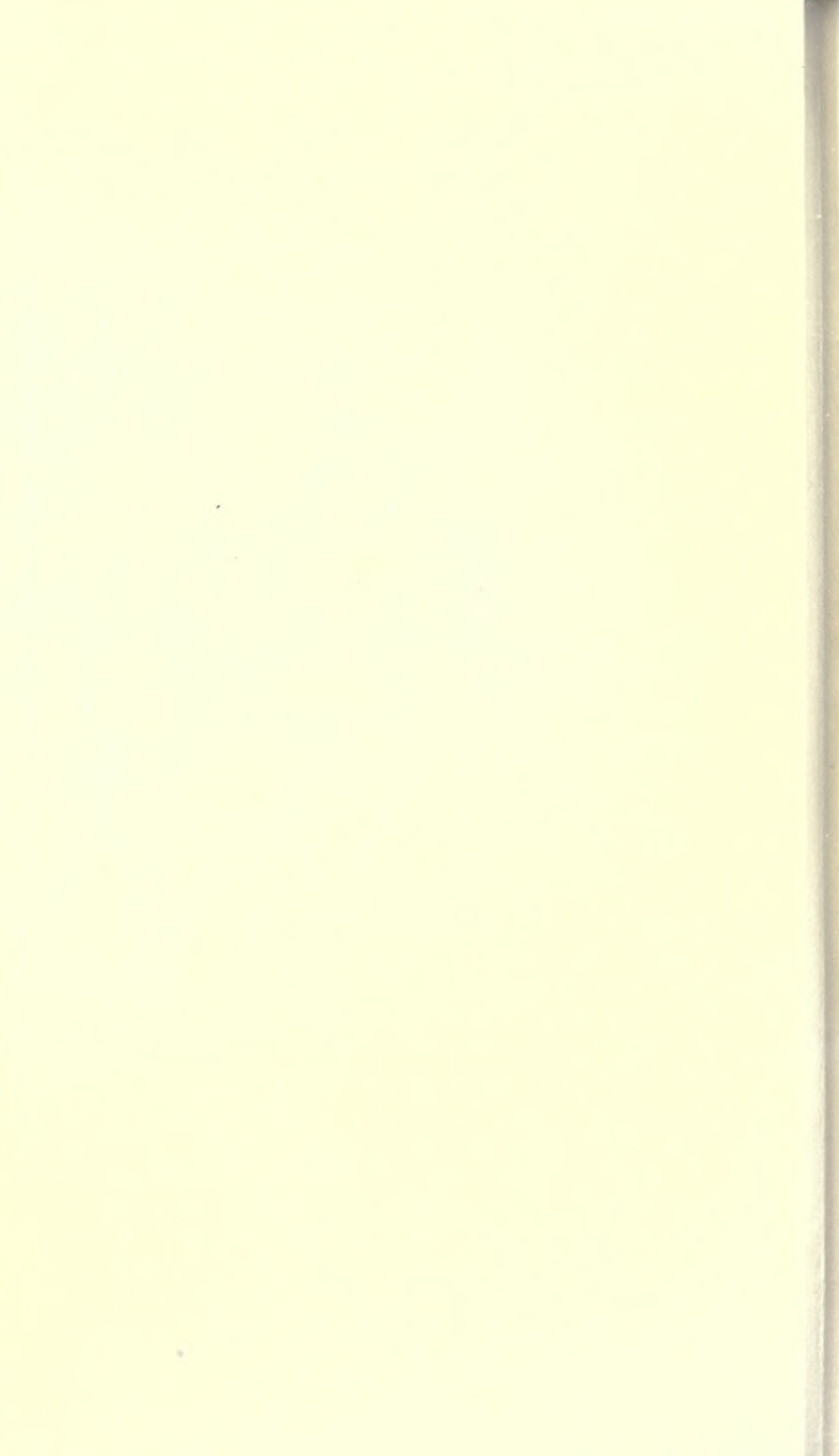
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